Monday, January 9, 2012 ★★ 13 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 32 P18 | Mobile Alerts: Text INQ ON BREAKING to 4467 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet | Today's Inquirer: 32 pages Twitter: @inquirer

BLESSING RITES A replica of a centuries-old black statue of Jesus Christ, known as the Black Nazarene, is carried by devotees during the blessing and procession of the icon's replicas in Manila on Saturday. AP

Terror alert at Feast of Black Nazarene

A very tempting target, P-Noy says of procession

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jocelyn R. Uy

IN AN UNPRECEDENTED alert, President Aquino yesterday warned of a possible attempt by terrorists to attack—and even bomb—today's celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo, Manila, saying the millions of devotees expected to attend the procession presented a "very tempting" target.

At a press conference, which was unusually held on a Sunday, Mr. Aquino said he had ordered security forces to be on high alert and that risks would be lessened if people stayed at home.

He specifically appealed to them not to bring "cell phones, weapons, fireworks" during the procession because a bomb could be detonated through cellular phones.

Organizers said they expected anywhere from eight to nine million people to take part in the yearly procession, which is to start at 8 a.m. from Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park in Quiapo Church, passing through Taft Avenue, Claro M. Recto Avenue and certain side streets. (See map on Page A12.)

The 15,000-strong police force in Metro Manila has been placed on full alert.

It was not immediately clear if Mr. Aquino's warning was related to a travel advisory to American citizens issued by the US Department of State three days ago stating there were "risks of terrorist activity in the Philippines" and that "terrorist attacks could be indiscriminate and could occur in any area of the country, including Manila."

Amid the warnings, devotees are still expected to flock to Quiapo Church to fulfill a "pe-

TRIBUTE (A12)

WARNING President Aquino warns of a possible terror attack on the Black Nazarene procession during a hastily called press conference in Malacañang. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Corona, family hurt by charges

By Marlon Ramos

CHIEF JUSTICE Renato Corona and his family are hurting from accusations aired through the media by House prosecutors and Malacañang that he had amassed ill-gotten wealth since he was appointed by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the Supreme Court in 2002, his lead counsel said.

Serafin Cuevas, a retired Supreme Court justice, said Corona was prepared to disprove allegations that he and his wife Ma. Cristina had acquired a 200-square-meter unit at the ritzy The Bellagio in Taguig City and other properties through illicit means.

"Of course, they are hurt. I believe as human beings, they are also affected by these [accusations of corruption]," Cuevas told the Inquirer in an interview on Thursday. "Even a simple accusation is enough to destroy

CORONA (A8)

Senate trial is not Holy Inquisition

By Amanda Doronila

BRAINWASHING the public with derogatory information on impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona has remained unabated in the countdown to the start of his impeachment trial in the Senate on Jan. 16.

As late as Friday, Presidential Spokesperson Edwin Lacierda was still stepping up a sustained campaign to press Corona to disclose his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN), which is emerging as a key issue in the impeachment trial.

ANALYSIS

SENATE (A11)

It's more fun for tarsiers in Mindanao

By Kristine L. Alave

MOVE OVER, Bohol. A new tarsier sanctuary that promises less stress for the endangered primates is rising in Mindanao.

The Endangered Species International (ESI), a San Francisco-based conservation group, is working with the B'laan tribe on Mount Matutum in South Cotabato to establish a tarsier conservation center on the slopes of the mountain also to protect the forest.

The project aims to provide

IT'S MORE FUN (A6)

PH protests intrusion of 3 Chinese vessels

THE PHILIPPINES has protested to China the alleged intrusion of three Chinese vessels into the country's territorial waters last month, in the latest flaring of tensions over the disputed Spratly Islands.

The Philippine government expressed its "serious concerns" to the Chinese Embassy after the three vessels, including a Chinese Navy ship, were sighted near Subitu Shoal in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) on Dec. 11 and 12, Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said on Sunday.

Escoda Shoal is "within Philippine sovereignty and maritime jurisdiction," Del Rosario said.

Lt. Gen. Jaime Bautista, the head of Western Command based in Palawan, said a Philippine Navy patrol ship and an Air Force plane kept watch from a distance until the Chinese vessels left the country's territorial waters.

The vessels apparently came from the Chinese-occupied Mischief Reef in the Spratlys, then cruised into Philippine waters on their way back to China as part of a regular shifting of forces, he said.

"We were watching them. They did not drop anchor or unload construction materials and

PH PROTESTS (A12)

Pantukan miners were warned hours before killer landslide

By Dennis Jay Santos, Karlos Manlupig and Germelina Lacorte
Inquirer Mindanao

PANTUKAN, Compostela Valley—Hours before the landslide struck at 3 a.m. in Barangay Napnapan here on Jan. 5, village guards and mine workers had been sounding the alarm, including firing guns into the air, because soil and small rocks had started falling, miners and authorities said.

Some villagers in Sitio Dan Uno and Dan Dos heeded the alert and moved a few hundred meters away, thinking they would be safe there.

But many of the shanty dwellers far below might not have heard the warning shots as they were in deep slumber or that the firing could have been mated by noise from the ball mills.

Or the people might just have ignored the warning because they were used to minor landslides, said Supt. Inviano Dalogdog, commander of the public

MINERS (A12)

LEARNING
Study links good teaching to lasting gains / G1

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Viewfinder: Comedians may rule this season / F3

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Second FRONTPAGE

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Lakas-Kampi is no more–Lagman

By Gil Cabeza Cruz

HOUSE Minority Leader Edcel Lagman yesterday said the Lakas-Kampi coalition has "ceased to exist" and that only the Lakas-CMD (Christian Muslim Democrats) party remained to represent the minority in the lower house of Congress.

Lagman announced the "death" of the Lakas-Kampi partnership a week before his anticipated showdown with Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez over the minority leadership when Congress resumes session this week.

"There is no more Lakas-Kampi, there is only Lakas-CMD with a few remnants of Kampi most of whom formed their own party, the NUP (National Unity Party)," said Lagman in a phone interview.

Lagman stressed that he was the chair of Lakas-CMD and former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was only its chief executive. He would not say however, if his disbarment of Arroyo whom he accused of plotting his ouster from her hospital suite—showed her diminishing influence in the minority bloc.

"I am not ready to say that," said Lagman.

Lakas-CMD, which was formed in 1991 by former President Fidel V. Ramos and former Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., and Kampi, which was formed as the Kabalikat ng Maunlad na Pilipino in 1998 by Arroyo, merged in May 2009 to form what was then the merger of the two biggest political parties in the Philippines.

Despite the coalition's seasoned size, the Liberal Party (LP) rode on the surging popularity of Sen. Benigno S. Aquino III to win the presidency and control the lower house. A number of Lakas-Kampi members jumped ship and joined the LP a few weeks before the May 2010 elections.

Faultless LP-led coalition

NUP executive director Reginald Velasco said that close to 80 Lakas-Kampi members, most of whom were originally from Kampi like Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino, formed the NUP a few months after Arroyo stepped down from office in order to facilitate their participation in the 15th Congress in the House.

He said Suarez, Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez and Occidental Mindoro Rep. Amelia Villarosa were the few Kampi members still with the party.

Lagman's sole ambition that his move to resign his near bed-ridden ex-ally with Arroyo's health problems so severe." This is totally independent of that. This is not about her, this is about the party," he said.

Suarez agreed that the fight for the minority leadership was not about Arroyo. "It is not the role of the minority to defend the former president, she has her lawyers for that," said Suarez.

Lagman insisted that he was "more competent, credible and qualified" to lead the minority, holding up a manifesto signed by most of the opposition bloc members.

Suarez, on the other hand, claimed he had 119 of the 29 minority members behind him.

"He is afraid of me because he cannot contend with me," said Lagman.

In a phone interview, Suarez said Lagman was merely using Arroyo to curry favor with the majority, which he planned to join after his "inconsistent stance."

"He accused her (Arroyo) of plotting his removal when in fact she has nothing to do with it. He wants in join the majority and the majority apparently wants him too," said Suarez, adding that he would demand a confidence vote on Lagman's leadership when Congress reconvenes on Jan. 16.

Suarez said Lagman apparently seemed to strike an alliance with the majority group, or possibly the PDP-Laban party of Vice President Jejomar Binay for the 2013 elections.

Majority leader Neptali Gonzales II said that Lagman would be a welcome addition to the majority bloc.

"I don't see any problems if he joins our ranks. After all, he is equivalent to 80 percent of the minority," said Gonzales in a text message.

'Let's see what happens'

But Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and GP stalwart Cavite Rep. Joseph E.S. Abaya remain noncommittal.

"Let's see what happens first," said Belmonte.

"Difficult to comment on the affairs of the minority. As for any leader, it will boil down to trust, confidence and acceptance manifested by a show of hands," said Abaya.

Isabela Rep. Giorgidi Aggabao said the Lagman-Suarez feud was just "fratricidal or a fight for leadership over perks and power."

"In due course, the minority will unite around whom LMA and I consider, Will the feisty affair damage the minority? Nope. They are not as remotely divided as the majority where some coalition partners refused to sign the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Renato Corona," said Aggabao in a text message.

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Obama call vs outsourcing has PH lawmakers worried

By Gil Cabeza Cruz

TWO FILIPINO lawmakers are worried that President Barack Obama's recent call for American businessmen to keep US jobs at home instead of outsourcing them to countries like the Philippines could spell the end of the call center business in the country.

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II said the Aquino administration should closely monitor US House Bill 3996 entitled "Call Center and Consumer Protection Bill" which would encourage outsourcing by American firms and penalize those dealing with business process outsourcing (BPO) firms.

Gonzales said he was worried this would unravel the growth of the BPO industry in the country which is fueled mainly by American firms.

Ramos's Samar Rep. Ben Evardone shared Gonzales' concern, pointing out that BPOs contribute close to $9 billion a year from roughly 900,000 call center agents. This is close to half of the $19 billion in annual remittances from five to 10 million overseas Filipino workers.

US$100,000 (equivalent to $10,000 daily fine on US call center firms that do not identify their agents' locations.

"I think that being an election year, Obama has no choice but to advocate popular sentiment like outsourcing. We must be ready for any eventuality because we don't want to be surprised, especially on a very crucial economic contributor like BPOs," said Gonzales.

Evardone said the Aquino administration must organize and send a lobby group to the US Congress to try and block passage of this bill.

"It's about time that we take seriously this (bill going against our BPO) now that Obama has laid down a firm policy against outsourcing. Government agencies should not ignore this. We might wake up one day and find that the jobs in BPOs are already gone if we don't act timely and decisively," said Evardone. "Every might want to raise this issue with Obama during his state visit to the US this year."

Evardone said the Philippines could link up with countries like India, Mexico and Ireland which also have thriving BPO centers.

NBI: Help us find Palparan

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Unable to locate retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan in the last 10 days, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has appealed to the public for help in finding the ex-officer.

Ricardo Diaz, NBI director for Central Luzon, said his team needed all the help it could get because Palparan, who is facing charges of kidnapping two University of the Philippines youth in 2006, "is not an ordinary fugitive."

"It's really hard to search for a [soldier's] ground," said Diaz on Saturday.

He said any information that could lead to Palparan's arrest may be given to him through 0917-8521899 or Tan-o'-soldier@yahoo.com. He said he would also be emailed through his accounts on the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter.

The bounty on Palparan's head has been increased by the government from P500,000 to P1 million.

'Craft of law enforcers'

A Makati court recently issued an arrest warrant for Palparan and three other officers in connection with the kidnapping and torture-illegal detention of students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, who have remained missing. Two of the officers named, Lt. Col. Felipo Anonuevo and Lt. Igl. Edgardo Osorio, are under military custody at Fort Bonifacio. The fourth accused, M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario, said to be Palparan's aide-de-camp, has yet to be arrested.

"The person is different because he knows the craft of law enforcers," Diaz said of Palparan, who has denied the charges. But the general went into hiding after the case of kidnapping presented to the Davao del Norte-based International Airport at the Clark Freeport-engulfed him heard. He is plane bound for Singapore on Dec. 17.

"Sir Palparan was also mistaken. (It looks like) my downfall will be Palparan," Diaz remembers. I tracked down his wife and son [and a] children to a house he had not declared to his in Pasig City." Diaz said of a five- 30 road by the NBI.

Reported sightings

On Jan. 4, NBI agents searched several farms and compounds around Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, the Philippine Army's biggest camp, following reported sightings of the former general there, but the searches yielded negative results.

Fort Magsaysay was Palparan's base as commander of the 7th Infantry Division from 2005 until his retirement on Sept. 11, 2006.

A front- surrender in Barangay Sosa in Bongabon town is denied reports that Palparan owned the place. The former general was not seen there, the caretaker told Diaz.

Mother was he at a poultry owned by a retired Army general in Guimel. Tinio town.

Diaz said the manhunt for Palparan was not solely an NBI matter because the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Justice were directly involved in it.

"The [Philippine National Police] has standing orders [to locate Palparan]. I [also] believe he is help us in the NBI. He has assigned a senior officer and the [Criminal Investigation and Detection Group] to assist us," Diaz said.

Judge Teodoro Gonzales of the Regional Trial Court branch 14 in the city of Malolos in Bulacan has not imposed a deadline for the serving of the arrest warrants, Diaz said.

"It is understood that it is ASAP [as soon as possible], but I need to locate him," he said.

Like the Grinch

"Palparan's [like the Grinch who stole my Christmas and New Year. I was not able to spend [the holidays] with my family," Diaz said.

"The whole country should not depend on me. Tat Bokking for one among 95 and Sen Filipinos. I need help. Guide me," he said.

Malacañang yesterday said it may take some time to find Palparan, but it was certain the fugitive general would eventually fall into the hands of authorities. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño

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DFA racing to get OFWs out of Syria

By Tina G. Santos

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is "intensifying its repatriation efforts in Syria to ensure our compatriots are out of harm's way."

This after it repatriated 56 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from the troubled country on Saturday. The OFWs, all women, arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on a Qatar Airways flight at 4:30 p.m.

They were accompanied by Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos.

According to the DFA, seven of the women were deployed from Homs, one of the four flash points in Syria.

Jolina Montefalc, 33, who worked as a domestic helper, vowed never to return to the country. She said that while the situation where she worked was manageable, her employer was abusive to her.

"I was practically working for all his relatives. He took me to the different houses of his relatives. One time, he hit me so I was forced to fight back," she told the bureau.

There are some 17,000 OFWs, mostly undocumented domestic workers, in Homs town and other Syrian cities, according to DFA estimates.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario flew to the Syrian capital to "help in the OFW repatriation" program.

The DFA earlier raised the crisis alert level in Syria from 3 to 4 in view of the months' deteriorating.

Under level 4, a mandatory or forced evacuation of OFWs in the government's response is implemented.

The foreign office noted the repatriation of Filipinos from Syria was a "continuing effort of the government since April."

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Accused in AFP fund mess hits back

By Marlon Ramos

AN ACTIVE military officer indicted for the alleged diversion of P2.5 billion in military funds yesterday assailed the Department of Justice (DOJ) for "silencing" itself to be used by soldier-hitman George Rabusa "and his gang" in their attempt to evade accountability for pilfering the military coffers.

Brig. Gen. Benito de Leon said the DOJ practically "voided the malacañang" of the military fund men when it recommended the filing of plunder charges against himself and 30 other active and retired officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"The records will show that it was Rabusa and his gang who enriched themselves in office and who robbed the public and the prosecution into letting them go scot-free," said De Leon in a statement through his lawyer Florentino Cayagan Jr.

Cayagan said Rabusa, a former military budget officer, "pocketed himself and raised false statements to pin down innocent persons and exonerate himself from the criminal acts."

De Leon and Rabusa were originally classmates in the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1981.

Sought for comment, Rabusa advised De Leon to prepare for his defenses before the Ombudsman instead of maligning him.

"Instead of attacking me, I think it's about time De Leon and the others admitted that they conspired in the misuse of millions of pesos. De Leon should explain how he used that money," Rabusa said in a phone interview.

He also took exception to De Leon's calling him the "architect" of the military fund mess, saying that De Leon had served longer than him in the AFP comptroller's office.

"If what I said was not true, how come it retired AFP chief of staff Gilbert Teodoro after my disclosure?" Rabusa said, apparently referring to the late Angelo Reyes.

Reyes, who earlier in the Cabinet of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, shot himself weeks after Rabusa named him as a Senate inquiry as one of the beneficiaries of the illegal conversion of AFP funds.

Cayagan said the DOJ should have considered Rabusa's admission that he maintained several bank accounts into which he deposited millions of pesos from AFP funds.

"These funds were taken his absolute control and disposal. These admissions are enough to show that Rabusa is guilty of plunder and should be charged accordingly," the lawyer said.

Cayagan said he would file a formal motion for reconsideration of the DOJ resolution with the Ombudsman.

In a 100-page resolution, the DOJ also recommended the filing of plunder charges against the nine-thirds of mid-Navy Cirunay and Honorio Villanueva, former military comptroller Carlos Garcia and Jaime Ugay, retired Maj. Gen. Hilario Mendiola, retired Colonels Cirilo Dumlao and Percy Diviera, retired Lt. Col. Ernesto Panaro, former 3/Lt accounting division chief Governor del Castillo and former AFP auditor Dennis Cabrera.

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So much has been done to improve the remedies and treatments for cancer. In fact in recent years, Guangzhou Modern Cancer Hospital has initiated the use of cryoablation, a method studied, researched and developed in America. This is a freezing treatment technology which destroys if not totally destroy cancer cells. Foreign clinical studies showed that cryoablation yields a 92.2% ablation rate with a single use of this treatment as applied on advance liver cancer patient. At present, Guangzhou Modern Cancer Hospital has made use of this treatment to about a thousand cases of advance cancer patients.

According to Prof. Peng Xiaozhi, chief specialist of the Guangzhou Modern Cancer Hospital, the freezing treatment technique destroys the cancer cells through rapid freezing with the subsequent application of helium for heat. The tumor is frozen by applying the argon gas into the tumor. The temperatures then drops to about 100 °C to 175 °C below zero thereby turning the tumor into an ice pack until the tumor tissue reaches the necrotic state. After this, helium is employed to quickly heat up the temperature. The hot and cold treatment causes the cancer tissue to collapse giving way to the destruction and shrinkage of the cancer cell.

Prof. Peng Xiaozhi claims that cryoablation was used for more than a century ago. However, it was only applied in superficial skin tumors or other tumors like it. But times have changed and with the introduction of ultrasound, the specially designed supersonic-acting knife which is also a good conductor for hot and cold gases, can now be positioned exactly where the tumor is to deliver the gases while keeping the normal surrounding tissues safe.

This is highly recommended to patients diagnosed with liver, prostate, advance hepatocellular carcinoma and other cancer patients who are not inclined to have the tumor removed through surgery due to the probability of vascular damage.

But what is pleasantly surprising about this treatment is that foreign studies showed that it has a 92.2% ablation rate when it comes to treating cancer even with only a single application.

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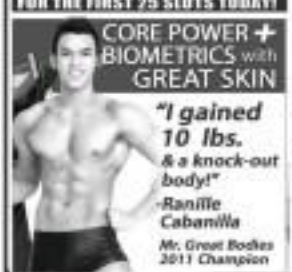

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Boracay businessmen welcome DOT slogan

By Hanna B Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

KALIBO CITY—Business owners on Boracay Island have welcomed the new campaign slogan of Department of Tourism (DOT), saying it will help boost tourist arrivals in the country.

"It's very well-thought-out, exciting and jolly," said Arel Abitanis, president of the Boracay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Abitanis said the slogan, "It's more fun in the Philippines," which was launched last week, was a catchphrase to which most tourists can relate.

"Filipinos are among the happiest people and warmest people in the world, especially toward guests," he told the business in a telephone interview on Sunday.

He said the new slogan was "much better" than the previous one. Last year, the DOT launched last June withdrew "Pilipinas Kay Ganda" after the slogan drew controversy for the similarity of its logo to that of Palawan.

The new one also drew criticism for being similar to the campaign theme of former head in the 1950s. But the DOT has since been unperturbed.

Dionisio Salme, president of the Boracay Foundation Inc., said his group welcomed the new slogan. "It is catchy for all ages because it caters to a broad audience," he said in a separate phone interview.

Boracay usually ranks as a family and young-generation resort in the country, easier to the center, family, he said.

"Everyone travels to have fun because having a wonderful and unforgettable experience is the most important for tourists," Salme said.

The way Filipinos and the Aquino administration have been having fun online with the country's new tourism slogan indicate that they have accepted it, Malacañang said yesterday.

"Everybody is getting on board, everybody is having fun with the slogan," deputy presidential spokesperson Abigail Valte said in Manila. With a report from Christine G. Avendaño

It's more fun for tarsiers in Mindanao than in Bohol

From page A1

TARSIER HABITAT

The group is advocating the Bilar idea about the potential of the sanctuary and as wildlife attraction, Adanza said.

pride and booster the pride of the Bilar, while preserving the hardwood forest on Mt. Mahutom, which is under threat from commercial plantations, said ED president Pilar no Adanza.

Adanza, a veterinarian who first traveled to the Philippines in 2001, said the tarsier population in South Cotabato could be bigger than that in Bohol because of the size of the area.

"We are still collecting data on the population," he said. Bohol has some 1700 tarsiers, according to the Tarsier Foundation.

Tarsiers, one of the world's smallest primates, are among the top draws of Bohol that established a conservation center in the town of Corella in 1998.

Red list

Tarsiers have been placed on the red list of threatened species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, which says their forest habitats are being inevitably by logging, mining, agriculture and other activities.

The ILM says the conservation center will be managed with the Bilar, who know the forest and the behavior of the tarsiers like the back of their hands. It expects the facility to be up and running soon.

Adanza said the center would put up resource trails that may be used to educate the public on how the tarsiers live and to make them understand the value of mountain forests.

Trees and be a wide enclosure where the public may observe the animals through a telescope.

"They can have a walk through the trails in the protected area, stay for lunch about medicinal plants. Then they can go down to the tarsier conservation center," Adanza said. "There is definitely a tourism potential here."

Nocturnal animals

Adanza said the conservation center would not disturb the nocturnal animals by visitors during the day as the practice is in most tarsier sanctuaries, he said.

Aside from managing the sanctuary, the Bilar-run environment also engage in organic farming.

Adanza said this would give the people a sense of pride for their place and work.

The ED president said the project would use tarsier conservation as the gateway for the conservation of Mahutom.

"People," he said, "love the tarsier," which he described as an "iconic" animal.

"We want to regain the forest so the tarsier can go back to perching other plants and species," he added.

Another endangered species, the monkey-eating Philippine eagle, was sighted on Mt. Mahutom a few years ago.

Adanza said his group hoped that the establishment of the area would entice other species to come back.

Pineapples, bananas

The slopes of Mahutom have been deforested and planted with pineapples and bananas over the years.

The mountain has a forest reserve of 14,000 hectares, but only 3,000 ha comprise primary old-growth forest, data from the Bohol Environment Office show.

The ED and the municipality of Bilar have started the first phase of the project.

It's more dangerous—not fun—in PH, says anticrime group

By Jonathan Bolaty

THE AQUINO administration should adopt a stronger peace and order drive this year, especially if it aims to lure more tourists, an anticrime group said yesterday.

The Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), in its yearend report, described the crime situation in 2011 as "disturbing," saying that media reports for last six months showed that the crime rate had "reached such proportion that crime surveillance were no longer ahead of the lines of the land and had a field day running violations."

"The killings all over the Philippines is a clear indication that the government does not have an effective peace and order agenda. The Department of Tourism's latest feared slogan 'It's more fun in the Philippines' should read 'It's more dangerous to be in the Philippines,'" said Dante Jimenez, VACC president and founding chair.

The VACC said Chief Supt. Aaly on December 2011, more than 12,000 crime incidents were reported—an average of 337 a month or 91 per week.

Among the "alarming developments" identified by the group were the unchecked assassins of journalists that earned for the Philippines the dubious ing as one of the world's most dangerous places for the media; the "unabated" incidents of kidnap for ransom targeting even foreign nationals; and the rising number of assassinations by suspected gun-for-hire targeting political figures and other prominent personalities.

Motorcycle-riding

Murder cases totaling 778 were committed by assailants riding motorcycles in tandem, Jimenez said.

"It was alarming to note that almost all of murder cases committed out in this manner because of the speed and assistance provided by motorcycles," he said.

He also expressed concern at the growing number of crime cases involving children and minors. In September, the group said 11 incidents of killings and rapes allegedly committed by children and teenagers were reported.

The VACC said 2011 also saw "militarized" murders and massacres of families, rapes and rape-slays of students even in areas of the supposed safety of school campuses, buildings of mining firms, business establishments and public places attributed to armed groups; and an "upsurge" of syndicated crimes against property, such as vehicle-napping and robbery/holdups.

"A climate of fear and uncertainty gripped the public in 2011. The people were exposed to the very serious threat of criminalities because of such degree never before experienced [as] criminals established their illegal activities with sheer impunity," Jimenez lamented.

Aside from advocating the restoration of the death penalty, the group called on the Aquino administration to extend its reform efforts against the "layers of corruption" in the ranks police, the criminal justice system.

Weak government

"The government is perceived by criminals as weak, thereby emboldening them," Jimenez said, citing the rising cases of Chinese criminal syndicates who have chosen the Philippines as the "first place" to manufacture illegal drugs and engage in the trafficking of women and children.

"Intelligent" scout procedures and delays have also led to dismissals of many cases subjected by defendants in the guise of "technicalities," he said.

"We have cases [mentioned] at the VACC whose case reached up to 10 years. Frustrated, the victim is easily tempted to resort to shortcuts to realize justice. Corruption and incompetence of investigators or prosecutors who lack skills are the two main reasons why crime cases could proceed beyond the crime scene and only a few cases reach the court."

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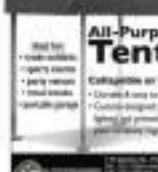

Fish park seen to bring jobs, peace to Sulu

By Nicolas L. Abao

TTE Sibi just may hold the key to long-awaited peace in restive Indu province.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has established a mariculture park in coastal Sibi, which would bring jobs and security to the province long wrecked by violence and bombings.

The first Mariculture Park and Aqua-Tourism project would enable local fishermen to catch and process high-value fish species and seaweed. It is located on a cove on Tuna Island and is surrounded by some of the local government units and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Mariculture involves the cultivation of fish species and other marine organisms in a part of the open sea that is enclosed with pens or cages. Fish farmed by this method can of better quality than fish farmed in ponds or nets.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala said on his visit that Tuna Island was the perfect site for a mariculture park because of its protective cocoon-shaped cove, which would be closed off with nets.

The 30-hectare mariculture park has 48 cages measuring four by four meters. Thirty-two of the pens were constructed using a P2.4 million fund from the BFAR.

The municipal government provided all the other amenities such as a mooring system, floating multipurpose hall, service boats and fingerlings, among other things.

Sibi Mayor Isidro Hakeem said the local government was pleased with the project as it would increase the income of local fishermen. It would also provide a livelihood for those wives who would help process these catch.

"This is just the beginning of a lot, we like for the residents of Sibi," Hakeem said in a statement.

Indu Rep. Hussin Sahidulla urged the residents to cooperate with the government.

"We don't need guns to address the issues we are in. Rather we have to work hard and pursue our rules as responsible persons," she said.

The waters of Sulu are among the richest fishing grounds in the country. But because of poor infrastructure and security problems on the island, investments in agriculture had barely trickled to come the years.

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1ST GRAND DRAW DECEMBER 30, 2011

Prizes	Qty
Toyota Wigo	1
Honda Civic	1
Yamaha Mio Soul Motorcycle	1
47" LCD LED TV	1
Samsung Galaxy Tab	1
Apple iPad 2 3G WiFi	1
Petron Fuel Card worth P15,000 each	40

2ND GRAND DRAW FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Prizes	Qty
Mitsubishi Montero Sport	1
Yamaha Mio Soul Motorcycle	1
47" LCD LED TV	1
Samsung Galaxy Tab	1
Apple iPad 2 3G WiFi	1
Petron Fuel Card worth P15,000 each	40

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Manila – January 9, 2012
Baptism of the Lord
1st Reading: Is 55:1-11

Come here, all you who are thirsty, come to the water!
All who have no money, come!
Buy, without money and at no cost, buy milk and wine!
Why spend money on what is not bread and labor for what does not satisfy?
Listen to me, and you will eat well; you will enjoy the richest fare.
Attend, and come to me; listen, that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting covenant, I will fulfill to you my promises to David.
See, I have given him as a witness to the nations, a leader and commander of the people.
Likewise you will summon a nation unknown to you, and nations that do not know you will come running to you for the sake of Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.
Seek Yahweh while he may be found; call to him while he is near.
Let the wicked abandon his way, let him forsake his thoughts. Let him turn to Yahweh for he will have mercy for on God is generous in pardoning.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways, says Yahweh.
For as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.
As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it yield seed for the sower and bread for eating, so is my word that goes forth from my mouth;
it will not return to me idle, but it shall accomplish my will, the purpose for which I have given it.

Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

John the Baptist preached to the people saying, "After me comes one who is more powerful than I am. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you by the Holy Spirit. As for me, I am not worthy to bend down and untie his sandals."
At this time Jesus came from Nazareth, a town of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And the moment he came up out of the water, heaven opened before him, and he saw the Spirit coming down on him like a dove, and there came words from heaven, "You are my Son, my beloved, the One who fills me with delight."

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Corona, family hurt by charges

From page A1

some republicans and reporters."

Corona is aware of what he will face in his Senate impeachment trial, which begins on Jan. 16, Cuevas said.

"This is no joke. This is a real battle," he said. "They [Malacañang and its allies] have everything. They have politicize they are dispense with. They have gods [sana] worth billions of pesos. What can he (Corona) offer? Nothing."

Cuevas said that while his client was prepared for the long haul, Corona would think attempts by the House panel to prolong the impeachment trial by presenting new allegations.

"A prolonged impeachment trial will not happen because we will not allow it. If you rebut are not rooted in the eight articles of impeachment that the House had submitted to the Senate, automatically is Dorsen

Freedom of info bill gets new look, new name

By Christian V. Esguerra

[TRANSCRIBED]

The Freedom of Information (FOI) bill pending in Congress will get a "new look" now that Malacañang has finally come out with its version of the measure.

To be called the People's Ownership of Government Information bill, Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chair of the committee on public information and mass media, said: "What will now emerge from our committee is the 'Pogi' bill."

"We are coining a new acronym in reference to our core component I would like to push," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Honasan said the new name, which is Filipino slang for handsome, would promote the idea that in a democratic setting "all government information actually belongs to the people."

The new measure "reverses" the main requirement of the FOI bill which is that a private entity would have to show in court why he or she needs a particular piece of information from a government agency in the event that that agency denies their request, the senator said.

Under the Pogi bill, it is the government agency that should explain before the court why it did not release the information, Honasan said.

"This principle is consistent with the fact that ours is a government of the people, by the people and for the people," he reiterated. "This means that the people own the government, including its information."

Honasan said his committee should be ready to present the Pogi bill in plenary, have it approved and reconciled with the House of Representatives version, and have it on President Aquino's desk for his signature till in the first quarter of the year.

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday said he was hoping for an FOI law "that will enhance transparency and accountability in governance."

"I therefore call on my colleagues in Congress not only to rise to the early passage of the FOI bill but to be vigilant and see to it that the bill is not diluted and to original purpose not changed," he said in a statement.

"I hope that by the end of the 15th Congress, we can proudly present to the world our country's version of an FOI law that would attest to our government's commitment to demand transparency and accountability from accountable public officials," Cayetano said.

Honasan said the differences between the Palace version of the FOI bill and the versions now undergoing deliberations in his committee were limited to "semantics."

He agreed that there was no need for an "information commission," saying it would only add another layer to the bureaucracy.

Hearing on Shell plea set

THE COURT of Appeals has calendared for hearing a pending petition of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. questioning a Manila regional trial court's resolution that ordered the Big Three oil companies to open their books of account to government audits amid allegations of price fixing.

In setting the hearing for Jan. 17, the appellate court cited the "far-reaching effects on the public" of Shell's petition that seeks to nullify the April 27, 2009, order of Manila RTC Branch 26 Judge Silvino Pampilo.

"Considering the importance of the issues involved, its far-reaching effects on the public...the court deems it necessary to set the case for oral hearing," said a two-page resolution penned by Presiding Justice Andres Reyes.

The Court of Appeals said that conducting a formal inquiry on the matter would allow it to "make a more judicious evaluation of the pending incidents in the present action."

In his order, Pampilo had granted a petition by the Social Justice Society (SJS) and directed Pilipinas Shell, Petron Corp. and Chevron Philippines Inc. to allow the government to examine their books of account.

SJS and various sectors had accused the three major oil firms of forming a cartel and manipulating the prices of oil products which had skyrocketed.

Also See Business

'Keep records of moles, scars, tattoos'

By Cathy C. Yatimont

A LEADING forensic pathologist has urged families, especially those living in disaster-prone areas, to keep files on each member's distinguishing marks such as scars, tattoos and moles, and have copies of fingerprints and dental records on hand to make identification easier in case tragedy strikes.

Dr. Raquel del Rosario-Fortun of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine pathology department said the suggestion was prompted by the experience of a group of 10 victims who went to Siargao City last month to help find survivors of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

Fortun said she was haunted by the photos of missing persons and the unknown corpses in varying states of decomposition awaiting identification that she saw in two funeral parlors.

Had there been more detailed descriptions accompanying the photos, it was possible the authorities would have been able to make faster matches with the corpses, she said.

Fortun, who joined Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III at the Kapihan sa Senado in Quezon City last week, was part of a five-woman forensic team that volunteered their services in Iligan City for three days.

"All details (on one's body) are potentially help. You cannot anticipate (incidents like this). Once the bodies are fragmented and mutilated by decomposition, dismemberment, fire, flashes and tattoos, are the first to go," she said.

Other descriptions such as body piercings, height, weight, build and hair color can help. Even medical conditions could provide vital leads.

"Locations of fractures are significant, especially when the soft tissues have gotten. A healed fracture could give us clues, as could perimortem ones," Fortun explained.

"There's a body is retrieved, a possible match could be made (more quickly). Even a person's handedness could help. An anthropologist could help us determine sizes (left- or right-handed). Most of a healthy body. These details taken altogether (or could), as I said, give presumptive identification clues," she said.

Cardiologist and graduated rapper Mither Lagunay, another UP alumnus, said Fortun's suggestions were applicable even to families not living in known disaster risk areas.

Lagunay said instead of submitting their dental records to the local government, those who believe they are victims of harm's way should take precautions.

Fortun said "definitive" information such as fingerprints, dental records and DNA samples provided the best clues.

Fingers gone

However, as in the case of a family that brought along a missing relative's 501 clearance that had his fingerprints, it would not be much help if the fingers had decomposed.

Fortun also recalled the case of a family that presented a photo of a missing man with decayed front teeth and a large mole near his lower lip.

"Obviously since he had dental caries that were visible in photos, it would mean we could do away with dental records. But pictures of decaying people that show obvious facial characteristics are a big help," she said.

Fortun noted that children comprised a large number of the flood victims.

Newborn DNA

"Children usually do not have fingerprint records. This is where dental records can become crucial. Although now I think that with mandatory newborn screening, they have DNA records on file," she said.

Fortun said the authorities were having difficulty identifying relatives and how the bodies were found.

"There areas should be treated as crime scenes since they could provide vital clues. In the case of Iligan, it would have helped if those who retrieved the bodies also noted the flow of the water, where the bodies had come from and, if possible, how many kilometers from the community the bodies were found," she said.

Fortun noted that while the National Bureau of Investigation was involved in national disaster efforts, it seemed that it was not coordinating with the Philippine National Police in collecting details about missing persons.

"Maximum information would be useless if it cannot be manipulated with ease to communicate the dead. How to achieve coordination seems it," she said.

Cops, others give cash, relief goods

AID (4th) continued to pour into northern Mindanao as the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) handing over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development a cash donation of nearly P400,000 and boxes of relief goods for the victims of Tropical storm "Sendong."

NCRPO chief Director Alan Purisima said the cash and more were donated by police personnel in Metro Manila.

"We are glad many organizations mobilized right away to send help and we are continuing our efforts in this cause," said Purisima in a statement.

The NCRPO would make another cash donation, Chief PNP, which Purisima said would be announced through the national police headquarters in Camp Crame.

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), the private concessionaire of the country's power transmission highway, also donated P5 million to cushion the impact of Sendong.

NGCP president and CEO Henry Ty Jr. made the donation through his daughter Jan Christine Ty, who personally handed the check to the disaster area in Cagayan de Oro. Reps. Pedro Rodriguez, Hilgay Hermie Ramos and Ilgan City Mayor Lawrence Cruz.

Earlier, NGCP employees at the Cebu City head office gave P178,900 in cash and 40 boxes of relief goods to consolidators based in Mindanao.

NGCP also allowed the use of its hangar in Cagayan de Oro for the use of its transmission facilities. The NGCP also paid for a chopper provided by the country's power distributor and electricity to local residents.

Meanwhile, the Knights of Rizal has established an Operation Rebuild for flood-stricken areas in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities.

The operation is part of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Knights of Rizal, according to acting supreme commander Reghis Ongkiko.

Earlier, the Knights presented a check for P50,000 to the Philippine Red Cross.

The Knights would welcome contributions from the public and other groups wishing to send aid through the Knights of Rizal. Interested individuals and corporations for assistance may be obtained by calling Mezanos at the Manila Knights office, tel. 523-9141 and 528-1974.

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'Click' on DOLE for services

By Jerome Aning

LABOR Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz yesterday said that almost all available data and performance reports of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) will be posted online this year to enhance governance. Consequently, reduce red tape and boost anti-corruption efforts.

"One of our thrusts this year is to develop new information systems to ensure the fast, extensive and computerized delivery and monitoring of all services being provided by all DOLE attached agencies, bureaus and services, including regional and field offices," Baldoz said in a statement.

The Professional Regulation Commission had uploaded a number of its services online in 2011. This year, it will make available online verification of academic records, professional identification cards and eligibilities. Applications for board examinations will also be available online this year.

These systems are currently in various stages of implementation, the secretary said.

POEA records

Also, Baldoz said, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, under newly appointed Administrator Hans Leo J. Cacdac, is set to computerize personnel records.

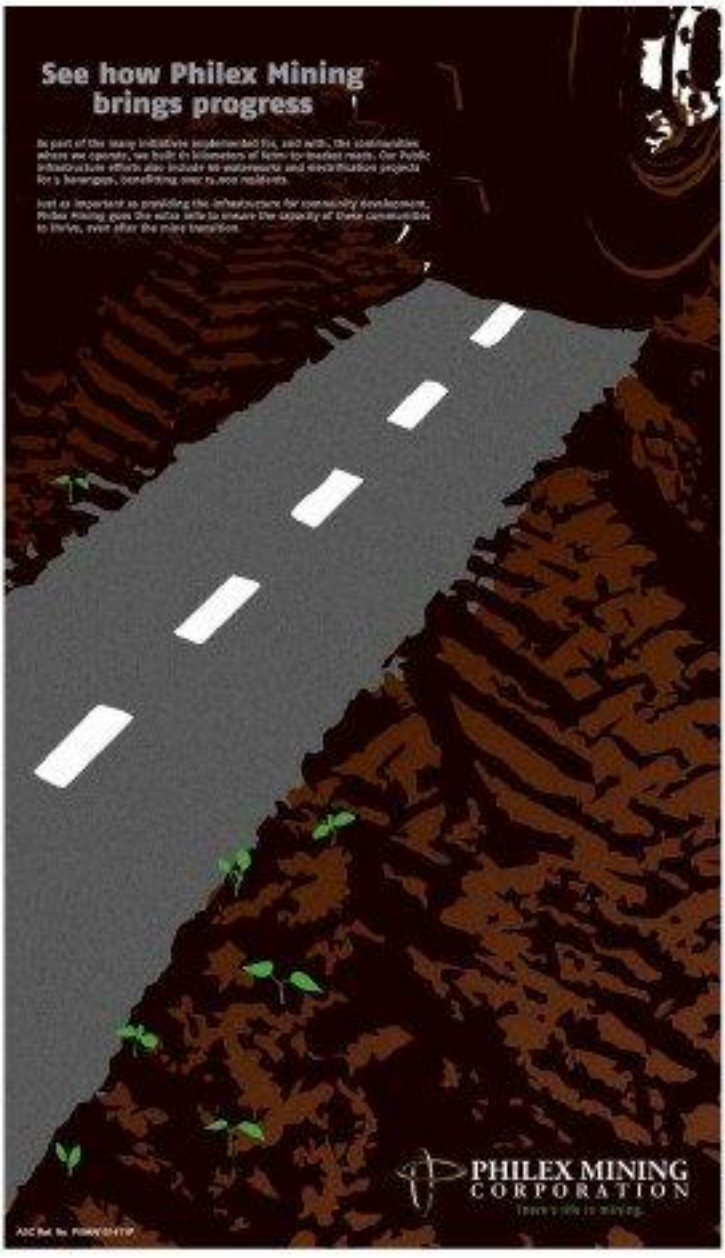
The National Wages and Productivity Commission would also post wages and productivity statistics online. It would have information and browsing capabilities to enable lawyers and researchers, among other users, to update their own databases.

At the DOLE main office, Baldoz said six new information systems will go online this year: foreign labor operations, enhanced labor standards enforcement monitoring, registration of establishments, case docket and monitoring, and human resource information.

Labor attaches

The Foreign Labor Operations Information System would monitor what labor attachés are doing, including work and travel plans and actual accomplishments on a quarterly, semi-annual and annual basis.

The Enhanced Labor Standards Enforcement Monitoring System would facilitate monitoring compliance of establishments with general labor standards, occupational safety and health standards. It would also serve as a database for inspected establishments, monitored cases and orders/decisions of secretaries. Performance reports of regional offices will also be available online.



Terror alert up at Feast of Black Nazarene

From page A1

sound ceremonial" with the flesh-skinned Christ, a Catholic priest said.

Fr. Simon Pascual, executive director of the Church-run Radio Veritas, said the celebration of the feast of the Black Nazarene had witnessed a host of rites and even "calamities, both human and cosmic in size."

"No terrorist will make fear in the hearts of the faithful devotees," Pascual said the Jesuits in a text message.

He said: "The Black Nazarene in their miracle works, healing in suffering and down's a personal covenant between [Him] and the devotees that no threat, whether real or perceived, will prevent the devotees from going to Quiapo and Quiapo."

Safety of devotees

Speaking on government radio and television in his recent, ex officio stand-breaker him, Mr. Aquino said he was issuing "no to any threats" to the safety of the devotees expected to participate in the procession.

The President made the announcement after making a surprise inspection in Quiapo Church. He then met with security officials, led by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, canceling his scheduled trip to Davao del Norte.

The President said he was apprised of "intelligence by several sources" that Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members during the Black Nazarene feast day.

"Previously, the difference between their intentions and capabilities has been quite pronounced. The possibility persists as we issue you of the risk in attending the procession," he said at a briefly called news conference in Malacañang.

"I call on our fellow citizens to exercise the maximum vigilance and discipline leading up to, and during, the procession. Report any and all suspicious behavior to the authorities, or call 117," Mr. Aquino said.

No cell phones

He asked devotees not to bring cell phones, weapons and fireworks, adding that people who would bring in any hot-empty would be arrested.

"Monitor and obey our warnings and instructions. This is for the safety and well-being of all," he said.

Asked why cell phones should not be carried during the procession, Mr. Aquino's spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye said: "Because of the possibility of a detonation through cell phones."

Mr. Aquino vowed that the government "will do what it has to do, to ensure the safety and well-being of the people, which the people's help we will succeed."

'Heightened risk'

Replying to questions, Mr. Aquino said the information he got from security officials "leads us to believe there is a heightened risk and, therefore, we are taking the necessary precautions, especially given the existence of the procession for the Black Nazarene, which involves quite a number of people and which is a very tempting terrorist target."

He said the suspected members of a terror group spotted in Metro Manila were "not just terrorists and that authorities had yes to link them to other extremist groups."

The President said operations were going on to arrest the group and that the authorities had reinforced their operations to thwart any attack.

He said more police officers had been assigned to today's celebration and they would be reinforced by armed forces of the Philippines personnel and other units.

"There are other units that have been increased to go after those people who have been spotted in the metropolis," Mr. Aquino said. He said the security preparations would be "very visible, very obvious and very thorough."

"If you attend tomorrow, if you will watch it, you will notice how enormously different it is," he said.

Threat is unique

Ms Aquino noted a "unique aspect" to the threat, saying the procession would have people in "very close accompaniment, which becomes more ideal for terrorists who want to inflict terror."

The President pointed to a "possibility" that the terror group would resort to bomb attacks but added that the risk was not that high, otherwise "we would have moved to cancel the procession."

"We are preparing to the maximum of our abilities because of the number of people involved, given the geography and topography of the person, easy point," he said.

Asked whether it would be better for devotees to stay home, the President said: "If they can accept that as a practice and as an alternative, that will undoubtedly lessen the risk."

Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo, who was at the news conference, said the security forces were monitoring the movements of six to nine individuals who belong to a terror group based in Mindanao.

As precautions, Robredo said security forces would not cordon the area but would use the Abu Sayyaf bomb gang or to other groups.

He said the individuals could be "thrown on members" of the terror group.

No bags or backpacks

Robredo also said the terror threat did not specifically say the attack would be carried out during the procession, others during the celebration. He said have asked Church officials to just hold a Mass and not the procession.

He said authorities were sure, ing the alert nevertheless because the group might take advantage of the procession to cause trouble.

Aside from fireworks, cell phones and weapons, Robredo urged devotees not to bring bags or backpacks as they would be subjected to searches.

Robredo said Mr. Aquino came out with the warning to assure to the devotees that need to be "extra careful."

8.9 units

Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) Director Renato Solidum said the agency would be issuing children and the elderly to the celebrations.

"Those with an important business in these areas are advised to postpone their trips for a while to the day," Robredo said.

He said he had activated the National Command Response Center (NCRC) to hold all available medic and four patrol units around Quiapo and along the procession route.

The PNP has also requested the AFP and the Philippine Coast Guard to bolster the PNP's 8.9 units "for security screening and threat detection measures."

The Manila police chief, Senior Supt. Alex Gutierrez, said security personnel and those found under the influence of drugs and alcohol would be ousted from the procession.

Along with their faith, devotees of the Black Nazarene should bring their umbrellas with them today to fight sinus, are expected in Metro Manila, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Administration (Pagasa) said.

Intermittent light rains from the tail end of a cold front moving over Metro Manila during the procession in Quiapo, forecaster Aldczar Aurelio said.

"It will be cloudy tomorrow with light rains, but we don't expect the rains to last for the whole day like what is happening now," he said.

The Nazarene's original statue arrived in Manila from Mexico in 1607 on board a ship that had caught fire. The statue did not entirely escape the blaze, retaining its charred face and body, earning it the name "Black Nazarene."

The Black Nazarene also survived fires that engulfed the Quiapo Church in 1791 and 1929 the great earth-quakes of 1645 and 1863, and the World bombing of Manila during World War II. With reports from Jhesse J. Pura, Reggie Ridulme L. Abra, Jayson T. Cantil and Inquirer Research

Miners were warned hours before killer landslide

From page A1

safety company of the provincial police office.

The death toll from the landslide went up to 31 as more bodies were recovered over the weekend.

Death toll rising

Maj. Jacob Dilipalo, civil military operations head of the 10th Infantry Division, said the number of missing persons went up to 46 because more families had reported their kin to the command post set up by the Philippine Army at the municipal hall.

On Friday police dismissed reports that more than 100 people could have been buried when the upper portion of Diat Hill collapsed on the mining community of Diat Dos, but townsmates from people in the area invaded there could have been more.

A miner working there told the Inquirer that more than 300 people could still be missing, saying that the landslide buried 50 houses. His estimate jibed with that of the residents who had helped to recover the dead after the disaster site.

Falling rocks

Apolonario Mallanao, 48, said that in most cases, eight will accompany and falling rocks would make that the tunnel was about to cave in.

"The village maintenance would let their guard whenever there were impending landslides to inspect the people from deep," said Ryan Mijares, 33, another miner.

Mijares said they were just hired because the mine owner had to ignore them, assuming that it was yet another minor landslide.

But those living in Diat Uno and other nearby communities, also in Diat, offered more reasons, have become a normal occurrence.

Lino Diaoal, a miner's wife, recounted how she tried to warn those in neighboring shanties to vacate a few hours before the death took place.

He entered 11 on the evening of Jan. 4, an episode noticed that the tunnel of the ridge above our house was moving. I told my husband that it was becoming too risky to stay. So, we decided to evacuate," she said.

Knocking on doors

After securing her 7-year-old daughter, Lina, 44, said she and her husband knocked on as many doors of their neighbors' houses as possible until most thought to move away.

"My husband [also] went to one of our neighbors in Kilkilan, who is living alone in his shack. But he won't budge as we tried throwing stones at his house. Luckily, a stone went through his wall, which is made of light materials, and he decided to leave," she said.

Diaoal said she saw that some of those living uphill had been beamed. Backlights on people below in a run. Hints of an impending landslide.

"Before the landslide, I heard the rumbling of the boulders and saw our house snapping and creaking. I knew it was a sign that we should evacuate. It is important that when we noticed the warning we should heed it," she said.

Daaoal said it was fortunate that her family lived on the upper portion of the mountain.

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MANUAL SEARCH Rescue workers source rocks and debris during a search and rescue operation at Diat shanty town, Compostela Valley, where a landslide buried closely houses in a mining area. AFP

Flood victims to get seized 'ukay-ukay'

THE BUREAU of Customs (BOC) plans to donate P20 million worth of smuggled second-hand clothing ("ukay-ukay") to northern Mindanao folk who were displaced last month by floods spawned by Tropical Storm "Sendong."

Agents of the BOC Enforcement Group led by Deputy Commissioner Pierre Lo Sioson-ing behind the attempt to smuggle in the contraband hidden in five vans and undeclared as assorted garments at the port of Manila last week.

Sioson-ing said the vans, which were consigned to Heritage Asia International Products Trading Co. and Global Philtrade Trading Co., contained used clothing, footwear and bags.

Inspection of used clothing, popularly known as ukay-ukay, is banned under Republic Act No. 4653.

Customs Commissioner Ruffolino "Ruffy" Biazon ordered the seized clothes free of the contraband to the use by Customs' over-to-the Department of Social Welfare and Development for distribution to the flood victims.

"We're making them available for donation to flooding victims. If the relief agencies say they need them, we're ready to release them. If they don't need them, then we'll store them for future relief efforts," Biazon told reporters.

Jayson Aning

PH protests intrusion of 3 Chinese vessels

From page A1

appeared to be just passing through," Esbloso told The Associated Press.

Chinese Embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

According to Del Rosario, the nine Chinese intrusions violated a 2002 accord between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that discourages countries claiming all or some of the Spratly Islands, from taking aggressive steps that could ignite tensions or confrontations.

Besides the Philippines and four other claimants have long been locked in a tense dispute over potentially oil- and gas-rich areas in the Spratlys.

Many fear the region could be Asia's next potential flash point for conflict.

The Philippines, along with Germany, separately accused Chinese vessels of repeatedly intruding into Spratlys areas under their control and sabotaging oil explorations in their respective territorial waters in the first six months of last year.

China denied the claims and reiterated its sovereignty over most of the waters.

Amid the disputes, the Philippines remains as the United States, a defense treaty ally, to strengthen its underfunded military, one of Asia's weakest.

President Aquino plans to travel to the United States this year to seek less arms deals and a squadron of F-16 jets, according to Del Rosario. Reports from AP and Jerry E. Esplanada

CJ verdict not solely evidence-based, says senator

By Cathy Yabusan

SEN. ANTONIO Trillanes IV said he is sure that the verdict in Chief Justice Renato Corona's trial should not be based solely on evidence but also on "what would be best for the country."

"If an impeachment trial were to be solely evidence-based, then why didn't our constitutional framers just give that power to the Supreme Court, whose members are supposed to be experienced judges?" said Trillanes, a lawyer and Navy senator who was imprisoned for seven years for rebellion.

"The overarching policy issue in this... episode is not how the conviction, or acquittal of ... Corona would be good for our country. To resolve this, I intend to use political acceptability as the sole criterion to evaluate the proposed resolution of either conviction," he said.

"My verdict should not be based solely on evidence as it may be, unless a matter of public policy," he said in a speech at a forum hosted by the University of the Philippines' National College of Public Administration and Governance.

"There is not a single book or reference I encountered that says that impeachment is modeled to be experienced judges," said Trillanes, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan warned against the possibility that people might again be provoked into "nothing to the streets" should they suspect that justice was not being served in Corona's impeachment trial.

Honasan said it would be good for all participants in the trial to keep their mind set right on Jan. 16.

"If you talk in public about impeachment proceedings, who is your audience? The one who weighs evidence is impeachment court, so what is your target here? To influence public opinion before proceedings," Honasan said in an interview.

He warned that, we'd go back to our bad habit that whenever we lose patience over something, we would again decide the issue directly in the streets," he added, referring to Edsa II that ousted President Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Senate Minority Leader Aloy Peter Cayetano said the impeachment court must exhibit impartiality because it would be "made as trial on the judiciary."

"If the Senate proves this time that we can have an impartial hearing then it will show that our democracy works, that our Constitution works and we can go beyond politics," Cayetano said in a debate with Senate reporters last week.

"There's a difference between a political trial, which is organized and part of the process, and partisan trial. What you say partisan, it denies you have already taken sides right from the start," he noted.

CORONA

Senate trial is not Holy Inquisition

From page A1

The second charge in the eight-article impeachment alleges that Corona committed culpable violation of the Constitution and/or betrayed the public trust when he failed to disclose to the public his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth as required under Section 17, Article XI of the 1987 Constitution.

This particular charge has now shaped up as the evidentiary issue of the Aquino administration either to pin down Corona for graft and corruption or not.

A controversy has developed from intensified pressure by the Aquino administration to force Corona to disclose his SALN even before the trial begins. This has sown the seeds of potential anarchy in the run-up the trial.

Centers of authority

The duties of a custodian or dumpsite trial has now learned to several centers of authority have anointed to claim control over the course of the impeachment proceedings.

These centers of authority are the Senate, which is the constitutionally mandated impeachment tribunal; the House prosecution panel, which is undermining the Senate's function by unloading sub judice evidence on the property acquisitions of Corona and his wife; and the Aquino administration, whose officials have been interested on the impeachment process by rendering judgment that Corona's salary as a public official would not have been sufficient to pay for the purchase of premium properties in Tagaytay City.

This conclusion is based on the evidence that was disclosed by the House prosecution panel's overprotectionary in her filings with the press—not to the Senate—in hand.

Chaotic trial

With these contending centers of authority trying to seek control over the impeachment proceedings, the special has been laid for a chaotic re-enactment of the impeachment trial of Joseph Estrada in 2001, when the latter in a clear case decided to suppress the disclosure of the contents of a brown envelope containing documents of Estrada's bank transactions that purportedly established the paper trail of his alleged corrupt acts.

This suppression of the evidence sparked the abortion of the impeachment trial, shifting the crisis from the Senate to the streets and resulting in the so-called Edsa II that led to the ousting of Estrada and the subsequent EDSA administration when ordinary and Cabinet officials withdrew their support.

This anarchic climate of the Estrada trial underscored the futile sibling from unwanted interventions in impeachment process.

It warns us of the dangers in the Corona impeachment trial of the vacuum of authoritative decision making if the House panel continues to undermine the Senate's role in conducting a fair trial governed by due process and bind the press with evidence not yet introduced in the Senate trial.

Wide cleavage

The interventions have opened a wide cleavage and fueled tensions between the Senate and the House, with the latter trying hard to defend its autonomy after the latter had surrendered its independence to the executive branch when it rushed the impeachment of Corona.

When the Senate seeks to take control of the Corona impeachment trial and conclusion the trial under the rigors of evidence and due process, and put some semblance of order in the proceedings, it should essentially be understood that there is a higher principle involved in the impeachment trial. That Corona should be removed not by the howling clamor of the lynch mob in the streets to send him to the gallows but by due process under the rule of law.

That is why the manner in which Corona is removed or acquitted is extremely important...indeed, more important than the consideration that he removed, by hook or by crook, will serve the policy objectives of the Aquino administration in making the new administration and its cohorts in the Supreme Court accountable for past wrongdoing, corruption and abuse of power.

Preemptive action

That is why the Senate and its leadership angrily denounced the House prosecution panel for violating the rules on impeachment, after the latter disclosed details of Corona's property acquisitions to press briefings, thereby preempting the functions of the tribunal.

These actions were in preparation that on Thursday Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile warned the House prosecutors' team to just withdraw the impeachment complaint should it continue to present its evidence outside the Senate.

"If they want to try the case outside the Senate," Enrile said, "then they should not bother the Senate and expose themselves to ridicule."

The warning raised fears that if the House prosecution panel persisted with its practice of presenting its case directly to the streets of mass public opinion and pandering to the gallery of the building gallery, it could provoke a crisis between the Senate and the House that would lead to the abortion of the trial, sending the case to the judicial streets of anarchy.

The use of the streets or even the news media as the forum for disclosure of evidence would render the Senate tribunal redundant.

Release of SALN

The Aquino administration did not appear to take the warning seriously, as the administration released to the media the SALN filed by Corona on July 02, 1990, shortly after he was appointed Undersecretary of Justice by then President Corazon Aquino.

The document showed that the assets of Corona were worth P1.8 million when he joined the Aquino administration and were worth about P3 million less when he left the executive branch under duress to join the Supreme Court in 2002.

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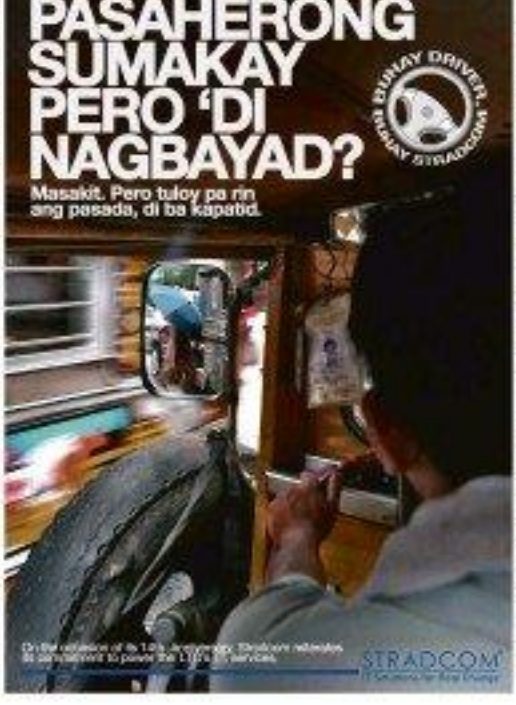

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Amateurish prosecution

IT IS just as well that the House prosecution panel has ceased relenting to the media evidence that it said it would use against Chief Justice Renato Corona in the impeachment trial. Such relenting smacks of trial by publicity and, according to Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, violates the rules and procedures of the impeachment trial formulated precisely to check further politicization of a process that is already bitterly politically charged.

EDITORIAL

Earlier, the 11-member panel held a press conference where it disclosed Corona's alleged purchase of a high-end penthouse and threatened to disclose his other alleged luxury purchases. The stunt drew flak from the senators, who said that the prosecutors violated Rule XVIII of the Rules of Procedure on Impeachment Trials. That rule states that the presiding officer (in this case, the Senate president) and the members of the Senate "shall refrain from making any comments and disclosures to public participants to the merits of a pending impeachment trial." It adds that "[t]he same shall likewise apply to the prosecutors, to the person impeached, and to their respective counsel and witnesses."

The head of the House prosecution panel, Rep. Niel Tupas Jr., defended the press conference and denied that the panel was preempting the Senate. But his defense—that there was no preempting the trial since "there was no entry of appearance yet by the prosecutors before the Senate"—was obviously a play on technicality, one of those tricks a lawyer usually pulls out from his bag of tricks. Enrile was not amused. "Does Tupas not understand he signed the impeachment complaint? He is a complainant! (The House prosecutors) should study the process if they are gentleman lawyers." If the prosecutors will not stop, "they can withdraw the case from the (Impeachment court) and try (Corona) in public," he bristled.

The prosecutors were obviously grandstanding while exercising the political pressure on Corona to resign and spare himself from a particularly trusting impeachment ordeal. Puffed up with pride, or perhaps suffering a lack of it, the gladiators building up their confidence in the arena before fame, fees and a lovely talisman, they were obviously pandering to the gallery drawing its energy to their side.

Not that the senators weren't grandstanding either. Sen. Pacifico Lacson suggested that senators "throw our impeachment rules out the window or tonight at (the House prosecutors') faces." He volunteered to file a motion to cite the prosecutors for contempt "if this exercise persists." Considering Lacson has long ago "extinguished" his desire on what to do with Corona, his gesture was at best an attempt to show his dubious impartiality as well as to stop the prosecution from undermining its own chances of success in having the Chief Justice kicked out of the bench.

But since the senators will sit as judges, rule on procedures and decide the outcome, the prosecutors have no choice but to restrain their propensity for grandstanding so typical of politicians. What they should do is build up their case and prepare well. All the energy spent on organizing press conferences and strutting like gunslingers before the media would be better used to homework and legwork.

Corona's prosecutors should perhaps emulate the behavior of Joseph Estrada's prosecutors 10 years ago. It wouldn't be difficult to do research since Speaker Feliciano Belmonte himself was a prosecutor then; he can provide metaphysics and lightweights like Tupas some tips on how to build up the House case against the Chief Justice. Both then the prosecution credibly built up the case against Estrada by the timely release of data and evidence—not before—but during the trial. It is curious that just about the only senator-judge who did not comment on the antics of the prosecutors was Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who incidentally was a prosecutor in the Estrada trial. Considering his politics, Jinggoy must be laughing at the antics of the prosecutors and hoping for more of the same.

The main difference between the two trials is that while that in 2001 was against a sitting president, this one is against the country's chief justice, with the obvious support of the chief executive—which makes it appear that two of the political branches of government are ganging up on the head of the weakest political branch. And exactly because they have the sitting power behind them, the House members are displaying arrogant behavior and, ultimately, amateurish prosecution. They should spare the public their action. Jan. 16 is a week away. They can have their circus then.

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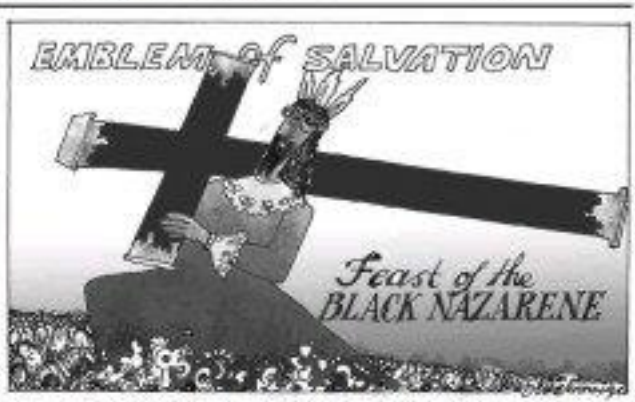


Away with the transport boundary system

THE DECISION by the government to have bus companies pay their drivers fixed wages is long overdue. If genuine the new order includes bus conductors and eventually jeepney drivers.) The "boundary" system is at the heart of the traffic jams and accidents in many urban areas.

In the boundary system, the driver pays the jeepney owner or bus company a fixed amount (the "boundary") for driving a passenger vehicle for 12 hours. It is as if the driver is renting the vehicle. What he earns from passengers fares above the "boundary" minus what he paid for the gas and oil, is his take-home pay. If he is lucky he takes home ten money; if he works harder he earns more.

It is this "boundary" system that forces the still competition among bus and jeepney drivers. They have to be busy and crowded streets in an effort to reach the waiting passengers first, and this often results in accidents. They swerve out of bus lanes and metro ends lessly in and out of traffic in an effort to get ahead of the competition. The drivers know they are violating traffic rules but they are forced to do it, otherwise they would take home less money.

The vehicle owners doesn't care what his drivers do as long as he gets his "boundary." Whether or not they earn more for himself, the owner is assured of his fixed boundary. After he buys the jeepney or bus, the owner is sitting pretty. The driving earns for itself without him doing much. It is the driver and bus conductor who do most of the work. This is obviously unfair to the driver and conductor but they are forced to accept it, otherwise they won't be able to drive anything and earn anything. That is the practice and everybody is doing it.

The new policy of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) should change all that. Of course the owners will oppose it. And what drivers also could be against because they earn more by working 12 hours straight instead of the regulatory eight hours.

The new policy, however, will limit the working hours to the legal eight hours or working beyond the eight hours the driver is already exhausted, becomes slower and he becomes sleepy, especially if he drives at night. This frequently leads to accidents. With the new policy, whether the vehicle earns more or little income, the driver and conductor get fixed salaries.

Before still, they should be getting social security and health benefits. Plus the right to join labor unions. The employer paying part of the premiums. They would also be entitled to the mandatory 13th month pay and the optional Christmas bonus. They should also be entitled to vacation and sick leaves and summer vacation. (Actually, in particular to the additional privileges of maternity leave. They will also have security of tenure, except when they are reckless and violate company rules.

This should result in more disciplined drivers. Road schedules for buses and jeepneys, thus eliminating the need for them to race throughout the streets to beat each other to passengers' waiting sheds. In other countries, you can tell the time of day by the coming and going of buses in bus stations (there are no stations in other countries, the jeepney is strictly a Philippine and Asian phenomenon) or the combined lack of transportation after the Pacific War and abandonment of surplus military jeeps).

In sum, this new "fixed wages" policy should result in more orderly traffic—no more traffic jams provided the traffic enforcers stop the "easy money" and do their jobs more faithfully.

All the other guidelines outlined by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) like the color coding, bus lanes, motorcycle lanes, etc. would be of no use if the drivers remain unruly in the streets continues. The failure of previous bus plans that the government will spend to build 1 new road from E. Rodriguez Avenue in Cubao (QC) to Mandaluyong would be a waste of money. That new highway would soon be choked with traffic if there are no reforms in the transportation system.

What the government has been trying to do is to move more vehicles when it should be moving more people instead. That means improving the mass transit system like the elevated rails and the ground level railroad. They can carry more passengers and run at fixed rails so they are not hindered by other traffic. We can reduce the amount of passengers that the LRT and MRT transport every hour. They are now the fastest transportation in Metro Manila. Trains are in chaos, take the elevated rails instead.

Unfortunately, that is easier said than done. The elevated rails are always packed with passengers. Many more would like to take them, but they look off when they see the passengers packed like sardines. Common sense dictates that the government should acquire more trains and coaches to accommodate more passengers. That would also earn them more fare and eliminate or lessen the need to subsidize them. They may even turn in a profit.

The Philippine National Railways should also be revived and expanded. Unfortunately, the rehabilitation and expansion initiative of the railroad is too slow. The railroad is always the cheapest and most efficient transportation system in other countries. Not in the Philippines.

If the railroad from San Fernando, La Union to Legaspi, Albay is revived, it would take much of the cargo and passenger load from the highways.

One reason for the traffic congestion in downtown Metro Manila is that cargo trucks and passenger buses going from south to north of Luzon, and vice versa, have to pass through downtown. They do not want to, but they have no choice because there are no other roads to get to their destination except through Rizal Avenue, Taft and C.5. There should be one or two more highways to bypass downtown Metro.

'Pakapalan'

IF I HAVE can't understand why Niel Tupas and company had to hold a press conference and divulge Renato Corona's outlandish of a penthouse unit in The Fifth Avenue. Then by giving the senators who are supportive of Chief Justice Hasnapal Arroyo...or afraid of her, given what she might divulge about them if they are not so—ammunition to put on their high horses and remind the world of impeachment rules.

If the point was to "condition the public mind," or Gregorio Honasan and company all legs, then the press conference might have been held by another group. There are lawyers' organizations and civil society groups aplenty to do it. Or a newspaper or TV channel might have done a special report on it, quoting confidential sources or their own research.

The only reason I can think of is that Tupas and company couldn't resist the temptation to go high-profile, or look good before the public, whichever came first or even more votes. Which reminds us that next year is election year.

Of course Honasan and company, if they were serious about impeachment rules, might also have warned Mike Enriquez against throwing Sec. Corona, Harry Roque has a point. "Principal has no business serving as the personal apologist of the embattled Chief Justice. Let his designated private lawyers speak for him, not commentator who is paid his salary with taxpayers' money."

But, no matter. The point is that the prosecutors could have gotten the public involved in all, or some without giving Juan Ponce Enrile the opportunity to postpone (but if they cannot abide by the rules, they can withdraw the case from the impeachment court) and try him in public." Or indeed without giving Honasan and company the opportunity to remind them that Corona is to be tried by the senators and not by the public by impeachment and not by publicity.

It is vital to the public into the impeachment as the fullest extent possible, but you don't have to do that by blatantly flouting the rules. You can always do that a lot more subtly. And you can always rely on the dynamics of the impeachment itself to do the rest. Once that impeachment starts grinding, or more importantly, once those television cameras start rolling, the people will be there. And they will be the real judges, not the senators.

The infinite danger is objectivity or fairness does not lie in Corona being relatively plain vista of the public eye, with Enrile as presiding officer. It is not merely that the Senate is already drawn along partisan lines, and the senators are biased, as they were during Erap's impeachment trial, to turn out into judges but into prosecutors and defense counsels. Enough that a would-be sane enough to hold. No one just four objectives Enrile, Honasan, Miriam Santiago, Tito Sotto, Edgardo Angara, the senators now looking at escalating "trial by publicity" could be to their trial.

Through the latter they could be said for Real Boss, Ma-Comagsta, Franklin Drilon and Loren Legarda. They might as well have been the prosecution their. Judges were the last thing they were, impartial judges were bias.

But more than that, the infinite danger of escalating the public's focus on impeachment is the issue of impeachment rules here in that there is no rule, however senseless, that has guaranteed public affairs for some time now. A rule the new government is trying mightily to push back, or even abolish. Plus to the rule of publication.

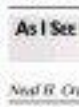
Which is why Enrile and not invoked that rule, it had been in operation before the second government, but the issued the ban on it in mind boggling ways, informing all law people with it. Corona chief of them. That rule says that you may safely disregard or ignore the public. So long as you can cite a law in your defense, just cut and the lawyers (sometime privileges), you can usually get away with it (sometimes)...you can another obstacle the (usual security). Indeed, so long as you have the money on your side—which Arroyo's minute had been saying tonight before she was taken to the her cyclone "We were the Supreme Court...we own the law"—you can be the most devilish person towards and unlawful.

Who cares what the people think? They can't touch you anyway. Who cares what the people feel? They get used to pain swiftly anyway and just make new jokes about it. Who cares if they call you names? You can always grow a hide and laugh in their faces. Pakapalan.

Elsewhere, that it doesn't work because the culture militates against it. Try pakapalan in the Western countries and what once like Japanese Korea and see where it gets you. It's citing a law to justify stealing taxpayers' money never mind stealing the law is indeed, it's citing a chief justice who is a midnight appointee, who has shown an absolute bias for a former boss, who has put one election after another to the path of agitating wrongs, would never have been impeached at all. Public opinion would have shunted him into the dustbin of history himself long ago.

Impeachment rules the place of that rulers in the country. There are limits to how far you can be pakapal with your scandalous doings parceled before the public every day, with every facet of your miserable existence stretched every week, with your wife and children made into objects of ridicule every day. That's the reason Arroyo's allies in Congress and others places have been at pains to exclude the public from Corona's impeachment. First, by objecting to it being televised and now by objecting to it presumably going the route of "trial by publicity." Well, trial by publicity is better than trial by duplicity. Or trial by pakapalan.

Which is the makapal, ain't really lying at all.



As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

Impeachment from start to finish

THE IMPEACHMENT process is initiated from the filing of a verified complaint. The chances of that complaint reaching trial stage were almost nil under the 1935 Constitution which required the vote of at least two-thirds of all the members of the house of representatives. No impeachment ever reached trial. Under the 1973 Constitution, a majority vote of members present at the time was needed to send it to trial was a vote of one-fifth. But no impeachment took place. The present constitution is compromise: the complaint can go to trial if supported by at least one-third of all the House members. But following rules of the House is also necessary.

It starts in the House committee to which the verified complaint is referred. The initial task of the committee is to verify whether the complaint is sufficient in both form and substance. The required number of votes for the determination of form and substance is not specified in the Constitution. Hence, it is all up to the House rules.

If the committee finds that the complaint is sufficient in both form and substance, the rules prescribe that notice be given to the respondent who is given the opportunity to be heard. Further hearing, the committee finds no "probable cause," the complaint is dismissed. If, on the contrary, by a vote of a majority of all its members, as prescribed by the Constitution, finds "probable cause," it shall so report to the house.

The House in turn can either uphold or overrule the resolution of the committee. In other cases, by constitutional rule, the vote needed is one-third of all the members of the House, according to the Rules, the voting is by roll call.

It will be noted from what has been said so far that only the complaint is required by the Constitution to be verified. Nothing is said about the verification of the votes of the members either in committee or in plenary.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

We now come to the constitutional provision which is intended to speed up the process. This was used in the Estrada impeachment case and it is now being used in the Corona case: "In case the verified complaint or resolution of impeachment is filed by at least one-third of all the Members of the House, the same shall constitute the Articles of Impeachment, and trial by the Senate shall forthwith proceed."

In the Estrada case, House Speaker Manny Villar, seconds after opening prayer, took a couple of minutes to read a resolution he had in his hands which contained the signatures of 73 members, more than what the constitutional provision required. Hence, no referral to a committee was required nor was any further vote needed. The resolution was sent to the Senate for trial.

In the case of Corona, a resolution concurring the signatures of 188 members was brought to the Senate personally by justice committee chair Neri Tupaz. The manner of collecting the 188-sig natures is now the subject of heated exchanges.

The sufficiency of the Corona complaint has been challenged before the Supreme Court by some lawyers and, in the words itself, by Corona's lawyers. An important question now before our deliberating the substance of the complaint is: What has jurisdiction to decide the issue of sufficiency of the complaint, the Court or the Senate?

Two opposing possibilities have arisen. One is that the Senate has jurisdiction because the Constitution says that "the Senate shall have the sole power to try and decide all cases of impeachment."

On the other hand, the Court is entitled to jurisdiction has asserted that it has the power to determine whether the constitutional procedure for impeachment has been followed. Besides, the Constitution has given to the Supreme Court the power to decide whether there has been "a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the government." Hence, can the Court decide that other happened in the House of Representatives leading to the impeachment constituted grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction?

We will have to await what the lawyers on either side will say about this question. But whatever choices of each case, the lawyers will have to tackle next the question of sufficiency of the complaint brought to the Senate. One core issue will be the determination of the kind of verification needed.

None of the above issues arose in the Estrada impeachment. These issues, however, have been brought up in the current case and they have to be resolved before trial can proceed.

On the issue of the needed verification, the text of the Constitution on general above is not of much help. But the rules of the House require that on the date of the filing, the complaint must be "verified and sworn to before the Secretary General" by the members filing it. The formula for verification is prescribed by the rules. Was this followed? Congressional Record for Dec. 12, 2011, has the seventy general testifying that they read done. It will be very simple to look into whether the verification papers exist. After all, these are public records.

What all is said and done, the final question will be whether a vote of two-thirds of all the members of the Senate can be measured. How many votes are necessary? Twenty-three? Twenty-four? Twenty-five? Twenty-six? Twenty-seven? Twenty-eight? Twenty-nine? Thirty? Twenty-one? Twenty-two

Ortho center being crippled

LETTERS

LAST NOV. 29, 2011, the taxpayers lost a seven-hectare ("NINE-ty-pesos") orthopedic center ("), which reported that Imelda Marcos Rehabilitation was dismissed in inspiring the Philippine Orthopedic Center because Metro Pacific "wants to possess the Philippine Orthopedic Center to the president center for better business, tourism, rehabilitation and commercial production of little presidents."

Now it's pending decision by the day that our hospital, the Philippine Orthopedic Center, the premier and only disaster-ducted and rehabilitation hospital in the Philippines, will also be privatized. Under the private-private partnership program, department of health-controlled hospitals are up for grabs to private investors. Once privatized, these supposed centers of wellness and health for Filipinos will be transformed into private milking cows of big businesses. Hospitals then would be like shopping malls where penniless citizens cannot afford a pricey commodity: health care.

Our claims are 95 percent classified indigent patients coming from various provinces nationwide. Let me add that our hospital is also the accredited hospital for point workers, many of whom suffer industrial-related accidents. Our workers know due to a fall from high-rise construction, is dangled little due to machine malfunctions.

We are a poor man's hospital. I must admit that we may not have the best smelling restrooms, but we have one of the most dedicated groups of health workers—despite the meager government support we are getting. We have managed to help a lot of people recover even when our budget has been clinically small for the past five years.

I am as baffled as everyone else who is in the world Penalona Aquino and Health Secretary Enrique Ona would want to privatized. The only thing I can associate with the word privatization is profit. Why would the government want to profit from the misery, ill health and disfigurations of its own people?

I don't think a basic right associated with the right to life itself.

The government should refrain more funds to health care services and health care system resources. It should stop pushing hospitals to be "financially accountable" because a service institution like ours could with the lives and health of Filipinos should not be likened to a merchandise. Hospitals are more like schools by where the services of his are rendered out of love, not motivated by profits.

Please don't cripple the Philippine Orthopedic Center through privatization and neglect.

—DEAN HERBERT VELOCES, RN, president,
National Orthopedic Hospital Workers Union-Alliance of Health Workers, Philippine Orthopedic Center, Quezon City

Collective endeavors instead of blame game

FOLLOWING THE iconic exhortation that reads "Mindanao, I have some serious issues at stake—calling on the government, its agencies and even President Aquino to act in the such disasters that be avoided or minimized in the future. I don't have anything against these calls. I just want to point out that we can have an effective government provided we cooperate, help in pursuing its goals.

We have the tendency to lay collective blame broadly when things go wrong, although it must be fairly the people or the government under the principle of command responsibility. Normally under "government," the "nation," "Congress," the "Supreme Court," the "military," the "GHQ" of which we presume to be unsuspicious. Let me forget, in the final analysis, responsibility is always personal. Things go wrong because some points or some persons did not do the right thing.

I think we must isolate that for things to right we itself, every person for collectively say, anyway, must do things right is enough for one person to do something wrong and everything can go awry. Think of a surgical team: just one mistake by one of its members can cause the demise of the patient. Think of a concert—if many persons, like the strong string, you can really have a veritable disaster.

What I am driving at is the idea of "personalism." This is "the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in actions that promote the good of other persons, such as the common good." This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person," as the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it.

So, government, Congress, the Senate, the speaker, the Army, the Supreme Court and so on and so forth share the same jobs, world. The GHQ means proper justice. But let's also say that each and every citizen does his part—precisely according to the time and role in solving the problems our society faces. We demand virtues from our civil authorities. We demand virtues from ourselves, too, in our individual capacities. Only in this way can we truly succeed and the societies of which we are members.

—FR. CICERO F. MAGDONG,
cmmagdong@gmail.com

anjan na!

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Conrad's nerve

CONRAD DE Quiros writes that "Sri Juhn's comments about what happened during Erap's impeachment trial tarnish the calm, clear equanimity as the thing that camps [him] to govern s.o.s. Why can't our officials, as their demonstration of People Power, fail or partial, if it came to that..." And in its and its kinds. Oneyinis, 1/2/12).

I do not own my motivation to the Senate or People Power in the streets, but to the dictatorship. Doctor of that dictatorship under the Constitution, in the two elections. I did was join Edsa II. I was never swept into the Senate, as I always prefer to retain my positions legally.

In our struggle against martial law, against human rights abuses, and the restoration of democracy, De Quiros was no more justice-directed than a thousand others of the Marcos dictatorship even, after 1986, and long after People Power had installed the mother of the boy he now flatters. Throughout martial law, he was conspicuously enamored and enabled to the Marcos dictatorship in 10's then Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, which organized pro-Marcos pageants and drained President Marcos' speeches.

I responded to an important statement that "I could sense the determination of my [Senate] colleagues to say otherwise," and added that "what I should guard is against is not how to fall part or not the commonwealth's business! ... the media would be the spectators of what is happening." (Inquirer, 12/29/11)

What is wrong with condemning colleagues who are not only privileged but also highly intellectually astute? The Senate may no doubt re-endorse newspapers and broadcast media during the trial to keep its minds free from everything but the law and the evidence.

The media whose supporters during martial law De Quiros, as a columnist, showed no love to do what they want and the Senate is free and well-advised to ignore them during this solemn proceedings due De Quiros has done everything to belittle, though without any effect, for what can forgo whether he cares and what he did before he fell to a station on the road to Palace favor?

Indeed, it is vain—and to say cheap—to be brave to a moderate, independent from behind the powerful, and insulting to those whose answers cannot be heard, will not be publicized or broadcast. It is vain to be eloquent before the dumb, for the opponents to dance for Senior against those to whom they deny it.

Scott De Quiros' thick record vis-à-vis the Aquino family. Before he set to Malacañang to run for the Senate, he ran for Manila. He called Cory "Queen of Business," and commented her during the Hacienda Luisita massacre in 2004 and, thereafter, alluding to P-Noy as the head of the security agency that he claims took Cory's memory away.

But when everyone he loved had died (Mercy, then Cory), De Quiros saw an opening through which he might conceivably pass into the Court of those not who had snatched blessings—and, therefore, for his candidacy as a senator like a mothak to a rich and sonorous intonation) then when P-Noy is wrong. This may finally be a blessing unintentional, for mediocrity ever upon [it] occurs.

—SEN. JOKER P. ARROYO

Doro a puzzle to reader

JUST REMEMBERING why Amando Doronila is kept on the front page and not on the Opinion page. "Mindoro" is a very scientific term, yet does others. I cannot understand where he is coming from.

I can understand the Opinion columnists better, as their opinion pieces are quite clear and based on their superior and modern Randy David's views are framed from the sociological perspective, Angelo Reyes' and Alexander Padilla's from the legal perspective, Nina David from the women's perspective, Melvin Mercado from economics, Melvin Mangahas from science, while Conrad de Quiros makes it a point to define and redefine terms such as reasonable—or a grammarian's perspective, with his puns and not with other political parties, and lots of fun at rule of justice... which reminds us about the quiet and not the letter of the law. Rigoberto Tiglao, well, I always prefer him as a further speaker of the mainstream wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines and, in the Arroyo administration, press secretary and ambassador.

I do not want to argue with Doronila for perhaps, he should be on the Opinion page, if the taxpayers has to place an opinion piece on Mindoro [who will be] the readership of the Inquirer and must include columns on the issues of the day? Happy New Year!

—ELLEN TORDESILLAS-MAGSIG,
emmag@yahoo.com

Abu Sayyaf bandits bomb another bridge in Sulu

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits bombed a bridge in Patikul town in Sulu on Saturday night.

Chief Supt. Hermogenes Leong, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police chief, said the bandits bombed Kilometer 18 Bridge in Barangay Pangdanan at 10 p.m., "rendering it impassable to all types of vehicles."

No one was hurt, he said.

Col. Jose Ariel Cruzaldo, deputy commander for Mindoro operations of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao, said the concrete bridge collapsed and "people now have to cross the river before it."

On Jan. 4, a bridge in Bandarak village in Patikul town was also bombed, but it was only damaged.

Cruzaldo said the bandits used three times to blast away the Tangan-tangan Bridge in Barangay Busing in Patikul last year.

He said most of the infrastructure projects, such as bridges, roads, classrooms and clinics, were built in Sulu with the help of the US Armed Forces. The US government has poured some P385 million for the ... Julfa S. Alijalie, Inquirer Mindanao

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No. 01-03-2012

Extension of Payment Deadline for 4th Quarter 2011 for IPMs in Regions under State of National Calamity

The deadline for payment of the 4th Quarter 2011 premium contribution of all Individually Paying Members (IPMs), including Overseas Workers Program and KaSAPI members residing in regions declared under the state of national calamity is extended until March 31, 2012.

The extension is in line with Proclamation No. 303 issued by His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III declaring Regions VII, IX, X, XI and CARAGA under a state of national calamity due to the severe damages brought about by Typhoon Sendong.

Further inquiries may be referred to our Call Center at (02) 441-7442 or through any of our Regional and Service Offices nationwide.

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Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Angat watershed gets more security to protect trees

CITY OF MALOLOS—The watershed surrounding Angat Dam, source of Metro Manila's potable water, has been granted more security to preserve its trees.

Bulacan Gov. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado on Friday asked Army soldiers deployed in the area to double its forest protection detail against illegal logging operations there.

Alvarado also asked Col. Hilario Laguada, commanding officer of the Army's 56th Infantry Battalion, to review and improve its checkpoint system, amid reports that timber poaching and charcoal-making continue to take place there in violation of Executive Order No. 23, which reimposed a total log ban in the country.

The governor discussed the new forest protocol when Laguada and lawyer Beatrice de Belen, Bulacan provincial environment and natural resources officer, presented 2,500 board feet of freshly-cut lumber which they confiscated from poachers.

Angat Dam, which supplies 97 percent of Manila's daily water requirements, lies within the 63,000-hectare Angat watershed reservation in Norzagaray town.

"Even people who manufacture and transport charcoal will not be excused from the enforcement of the total log ban. No one is allowed to use forest resources for charcoal. Violators will be prosecuted," Alvarado said.

He also instructed Senior Supt. Fernando Mendez, Bulacan police director, to look into reports that armed militia groups are behind illegal logging operations inside the watershed.

He was reacting to information supplied by Dr. Helen and Martin Francisco, General Luna Regional Development Council private sector representative for environment protection, that some of the confiscated lumber came from homeowners living near the watershed.

In Baguio City, Mayor Mauricio Domogan washed his hands off a processing permit issued by the Cordillera office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to a local mall, which drew online criticism from environmentalists who invoke the log ban.

In a statement, Domogan said: SM City Baguio had forwarded in 2011 its mall program for expanding its parking facility which would require cutting up to 87 pine trees on Luneta Hill.

Domogan said the city government had asked SM to consider including the development of a central bus terminal, as part of its program.

SM looms over forested Hall Road, which sewer line companies still use as temporary terminal despite an ordinance that directs them to relocate outside the central business district. Carmela Reyes-Batnijan, Inquirer Central Luzon, with a report from Eduard Cubreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

MILF rebels see peace pact by March

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—The rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) said a peace agreement to end over four decades of rebellion in Mindanao could be reached by March this year if the autonomy formula the government will offer will respond to the Bangsamoro right to self-determination.

The declaration heightens the expectations of what would come out from Kuala Lumpur beginning Monday where the peace panels of government and the MILF reassess for a three-day formal meeting.

Based on the parties' joint statement last month, their seven meeting is geared to "the continuation of discussions on the substantive areas" of the peace negotiations with the view of "crafting a framework agreement."

The government panel has set the first quarter of this year as its timetable for concluding negotiations for a political settlement with the MILF.

This is consistent with the timeframe of President Aquino to come to political terms with the country's insurgencies, if possible by 2012.

Excited

"Surely, the MILF is so excited as the government in inviting this negotiation in March this year. If the two parties can do it in such a short period, why not do it. It is good for everybody, including the international community," read a statement posted in the rebel group's official website.

The MILF said it would earnestly look into the details of government's autonomy formula in a Ramos Bangsamoro self-governance policy.

"If the government is really truthful to what autonomy and right to self-determination (SED) are all about, then the March timeline is very easy to achieve," the MILF posited.

Under the Malaysian-facilitated peace negotiations since 2001, the MILF dropped its bid for independence and vie for an Islamic self-governance within the framework of the Philippine state.

Much of reviewed agreement with the Mindanao peace process came through the parties' Dec. 5-7, 2011 meeting.

For the first time, the rebel group revealed that during that meeting, "the two parties agreed in principle [on] some eleven points on various issues and concerns."

A major consensus "is for the establishment of autonomy in the Bottor Moro (sic) region."

However, the MILF wants this autonomy to be "a range above the present autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which it said is simply an "administrative region."

The MILF further said that it wants to rise any government's 3-for-1 formula ostensibly shaping into "territorial autonomy" and veer away from the failed formula of Moro integration.

Crucial year

The MILF considers 2012 a "crucial year in peace talks." It views the government's goal as "a bold attempt at closing the final chapter of what otherwise is a long peace-making process in Mindanao."

Peace negotiations with Moro rebels have been on on-and-off fashion. In 1976, the government inked the Tripoli Agreement of Peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), but it took 20 years for both parties to agree on a modality of implementation.

The 15-year peace process with the MILF, which began in Jan. 7, 1997, was also interrupted by the outbreak of three major wars.

The negotiations have now spanned through four presidencies.

RED LEAFY VEGIES

Benguet farmers in La Trinidad town have been busy cultivating red and green lettuce as cool weather takes over the mountain region. Because of the climate, these farmers have become Manila's major supplier of salad vegetables. EDWIN BACASMAS/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Song on Feast of the Epiphany losing tune to modernity

IMUS, Cavite—There was a time when every Jan. 6, Epiphany, or Feast of the Three Kings, was considered a holiday in Imus.

Christ-sharp by the lilting strains of the Gallicos, a Christmas carol which is losing.

Gallicos is perhaps the oldest and longest Pangalinan song that tells the story from conception to birth, of Jesus Christ. Catholic priest Emmanuel Encarnacion said.

The word Gallicos, he said, is short for "Gallicoy," a Pangalinan word meaning "comet/star."

Central Mariwel Mihanonay, 27, the director of the Mariwel, local government choir, said the song is sung for 19 minutes.

A group of residents from central Pangasinan town would then entered houses and sing, just like the usual caroling, and are given some money by house owners on Jan. 6, the Feast of the Epiphany.

The song seemed to be historical to be sung at eight until early morning, when everyone is fast asleep. So the story goes: "Mimmay ian nabbin ayar / Si inter na Jesu Kristo / Ontinogan ala maldemar / Si Intenas ing dias inona [Already night / In given by God / Let us all awaken / Because God has been born]."

Gallicos is the chorus song of the Gallicano Festival of the pilgrimage town of Mirunong, where it is sung during festivities held every first week of December.

There are hardly "young people" like Vasilan singing the song and the song is fading out to modern music. Gallicos is heard only during cultural festivals, like the previous government's "Bulilak a Taon" (Golden Heritage).

Who wrote the song is not known, but it was probably composed during the Spanish period, Encarnacion said.

"You can see the influences of Mexican music in the song," he said.

Gallicos is written in metered verse and sung solo or by shepherds to announce the birth of the "King of Kings who was born in Bethlehem."

The chorus goes: "Gallico, gallico capanet nam / Gallicoy on gallicoet mommagpatong / Si Ari ning ari ari ray, saleonen nan / A dial Belen sa nimabat [Come you shepherds / Come you who went to hence / The king of the heavens / Who has been born in a manger]."

Encarnacion said Gallicos was the competition piece of the Mirunong town council government during the Bulilak a Taon competition in December, winning for the group for the top prize.

Villanueva said he chose the song, whose melody is learned from his parents and friends, for its relevance because it was Christmas when the competition was held.

"I encouraged it, but preserved the longevity of the melody," he said. "It was a very popular song among our ancestors and was traditionally sung during [the] Christmas [season]," Melinda Sotelo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN *Snapshot*

Laguna de Bay gets ₱270M for projects, facility improvement

By Marlowe Cleon
Inquirer Southern Luzon

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—President Aquino had approved the release of P270 million to the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), where she embedded party mate and presidential adviser Ignacio Bunye as chairman, sources confirmed.

Based on the parties' joint statement last month, their seven meeting is geared to "the continuation of discussions on the substantive areas" of the peace negotiations with the view of "crafting a framework agreement."

The government panel has set the first quarter of this year as its timetable for concluding negotiations for a political settlement with the MILF.

This is consistent with the timeframe of President Aquino to come to political terms with the country's insurgencies, if possible by 2012.

Excited

"Surely, the MILF is so excited as the government in inviting this negotiation in March this year. If the two parties can do it in such a short period, why not do it. It is good for everybody, including the international community," read a statement posted in the rebel group's official website.

The MILF said it would earnestly look into the details of government's autonomy formula in a Ramos Bangsamoro self-governance policy.

"If the government is really truthful to what autonomy and right to self-determination (SED) are all about, then the March timeline is very easy to achieve," the MILF posited.

Under the Malaysian-facilitated peace negotiations since 2001, the MILF dropped its bid for independence and vie for an Islamic self-governance within the framework of the Philippine state.

Much of reviewed agreement with the Mindanao peace process came through the parties' Dec. 5-7, 2011 meeting.

For the first time, the rebel group revealed that during that meeting, "the two parties agreed in principle [on] some eleven points on various issues and concerns."

A major consensus "is for the establishment of autonomy in the Bottor Moro (sic) region."

However, the MILF wants this autonomy to be "a range above the present autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which it said is simply an "administrative region."

The MILF further said that it wants to rise any government's 3-for-1 formula ostensibly shaping into "territorial autonomy" and veer away from the failed formula of Moro integration.

Crucial year

The MILF considers 2012 a "crucial year in peace talks." It views the government's goal as "a bold attempt at closing the final chapter of what otherwise is a long peace-making process in Mindanao."

Peace negotiations with Moro rebels have been on on-and-off fashion. In 1976, the government inked the Tripoli Agreement of Peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), but it took 20 years for both parties to agree on a modality of implementation.

The 15-year peace process with the MILF, which began in Jan. 7, 1997, was also interrupted by the outbreak of three major wars.

The negotiations have now spanned through four presidencies.

The six LLDA projects were the installation of Acmula, solar to aide the presidential adviser on environmental protection and a party mate of Aquino in the Liberal Party (LP).

Breakdown

The DBM said the fund breakdown and the six projects were as follows: P76.5 million for the Laguna de Bay quality management restoration water-push, a bioremediation technology facility; P21 million to improve a road leading to a Manila Bay Boracay facility (MBF) in Tersa, Rizal; P100 million for the construction of a "green, climate-sensitive, and energy-efficient" LLDA headquarters; P50 million to upgrade the agency's laboratory equipment; P4.5 million for the procurement of surveillance and monitoring instruments; and P17 million to fund a Project Feasibility Development Team to enhance the agency's mandate.

Acmula is facing graft charges over the alleged misuse of the priority development assistance fund when he was congressman of Bukidnon.

"We welcome the President now giving his attention, and not only the attention but the budget, to the Laguna Lake, although we ask how the LLDA made the allocation?" said Chino Acmula, chair of the non-government organization Kilusang Lawa-Kalikasan (KLK).

Group

The KLK is a community-based group of lakeshore residents and fishermen in Laguna. The group conducts discussions with scientists from the University of the Philippines Los Baños to determine the real condition and water contamination level of the lake.

Adolfo Iyoy Lluz, who's business as a regulatory body, ELE proposes the creation of a research center that is mainly backed by the science community.

"Given the biological and chemical problems [in the lake] they come up with an architectural solution. We just hope that is not image-building," said ELE exclusive Arthur Manchola.

The LLDA has offices in Quezon City, a laboratory in Tanay, Rizal and harbor masterate in Calauan Laguna, according to Corey Geronimo of the LLDA information's office. The agency has yet to find a location for the P300-million "green" building.

The road rehabilitation facility in Tersa, Rizal, is meant to connect the 4.4-kilometer tugged road leading to the MBF in Barangay Daliq, according to municipal environment officer Walter Refugio.

The MBF in Tersa, owner Mayor Isidel Ando Cruz, is also a member of the LE was built in 2005 under the Laguna de Bay Institutions and Strengthening and Community Participation (Lawgis) Project.

Lawgis is jointly funded by World Bank, the Netherlands Government, local government units and the LLDA.

ENVIRONMENTAL scientist Dr. Marina Zafaralla develops the Aquatic Macrophyte Bioreaction System to reduce pollution in Malinta Creek, a tributary of the Laguna Lake.

Take geohazard studies seriously, LGUs urged

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Joey A. Gabinta
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Eastern and Western Visayas has reminded their appeal to the local officials to take seriously geohazard assessments in preparing for calamities amid disastrous flooding and landslides.

MGB Western Visayas director Leo Jun Jugan said lots of lives could be prevented through adequate preparation based on the susceptibility of areas to flooding and landslides.

He said the assessments provide a guide in making contours of areas most likely to be affected by these hazards.

Roger de Dios, MGB director for Eastern Visayas, pointed out that their office had no police power to authorize or remove those people living in landslide-prone areas.

"We have done our part by informing them that these were hamletpron to their respective areas which are prone to landslide after we have made our assessments. So, they (local officials) should do their part," De Dios said on Friday. At least 38 people were killed and many others injured in last Thursday's landslide in Compostela Valley, in the latest deadly landslides in mining areas.

Last month, more than 1,000 were killed, mostly residents along river banks, in flash floods in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities.

Based on geohazard assessments conducted from 2006 to 2010 of 4,033 hamletpron in 123 municipalities in Western Visayas, the MGB categorized 164 hamletpron (13.91 percent) as "high risk," 550 (13.57 percent) as "moderate risk," 700 (17.27 percent) as "low risk" and 2,239 (55.24 percent) as posing no risks.

High risk hamletpron are those with active faults or recent landslides and with the presence of numerous and large tension cracks that would directly affect the community. These inventories have steep slopes and drainage that are prone to landslide (damming materials formed by landslides).

The moderate risk areas are those with inactive and old landslides and those with landslide slopes and smaller tension cracks that are located away from the community.

Low-risk villages are those with low and gently sloping areas.

Among the six provinces in Western Visayas, Iloilo has the most number of villages with geohazard risks with 899 (283 high risk, 287 medium risk and 328 low risk).

This is followed by Antique with 361 (130 high risk, 91 medium risk and 101 low risk); Capiz (with 396 (90 high risk, 16 medium risk and 300 low risk); Negros Occidental with 305 (35 high risk, 30 medium risk and 300 low risk); Aklan (with 150 (58 high risk, 64 medium risk and 28 low risk); and Guimaras (with 48 (8 high risk, 35 medium risk and 22 low risk).

In terms of number of areas categorized as high and medium risk relative to total number of barangays, Antique had the most areas with 288 (47.23 percent), followed by Iloilo with 570 (46 percent) and Aklan with 99 (28.92 percent).

The MGB said advisories were given to barangays on the geohazard areas/vulnerability of their area based on the assessment. The assessments were also disseminated to chief executives and government agencies.

In Eastern Visayas, MGB identified 2,531 of the 3,198 barangays as "susceptible" to a landslide incident.

In Biliran, 99 of the 113 assessed barangays were considered to be landslide prone; 230 of the 371 assessed barangays in Eastern Samar; 645 of 800 barangays in Leyte; 366 of the 696 barangays in Northern Samar; 720 of 861 barangays in Samar and 341 of 669 barangays in Southern Leyte.

SORSOGON environment officer Urbanio Mañana Rodriguez plants mangrove propagules in Barcelona town during a tree planting last year

Greening drive in Bicol region overshoots target, says exec

By Mar S. Arguelles
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—The government's national greening program (NGP) in Bicol gained headway by surpassing its target by 22 percent with over 6,000 hectares of bare land planted to close to 4 million tree seedlings.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional director Marcia Fragada said that since the NGP was launched in Bicol in May last year, 3.9 million tree seedlings have been planted in 6,381.9 hectares and distributed to reforestation, agroforest to 5,084 hectares for 2011.

"Despite the fact that the NGP was started on by the second quarter of 2011 we were able to exceed our target (by 12 percent), a significant achievement of our commitment to the government's greening program," Fragada said on Saturday.

Fragada, quoting a recent report from the Forest Management Service on the agency's NGP implementation in Bicol, said Camarines Sur led with 2,182,378 tree seedlings planted in 1,005.56 ha, followed by Albay with 470,999 seedlings planted in 464.5 ha, while Camarines Norte was third with 432,498 seedlings planted in 641.2 ha.

Masbate has 317,365 seedlings planted in 734.3 ha, Catanduanes was fifth with 191,486 seedlings planted in 443.2 ha, and Sorsogon with 227,360 seedlings planted in 467.3 ha.

Double target

Based on the report, 21,490 stakeholders have so far enlisted in the program and took part in planting the seedlings during the year. They represented a cross section of public and private volunteers from government agencies, schools, civic organizations including the Church, local government units and business sectors.

Because of the public support for NGP, Environment Secretary Ramon Paje announced recently that DENR intended to double the national target or 200,000 ha for 2012.

Paje has also reiterated NGP's goal of putting a minimum survival rate of 80 percent for the seedlings by tapping scientific and social upland practices and confining identified NGP planting sites only in areas where there were communities that could be tapped to maintain and ensure the survival of planted seedlings into mature trees.

The NGP targets to plant 1.5 billion tree seedlings in 1.5 million hectares nationwide from 2011 to 2016.

Priority areas for planting included mangrove and protected areas, ancestral domain areas, civil and military areas, urban areas under the governing plan of local government units, inactive and abandoned mine sites, and all other suitable lands for reforestation.

"This year, we will double the effort to have practically all Bicolanos do their share in planting tree seedlings," Fragada said.

Group hails Tagaytay ban on kids on motorcycles

By Marivic Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

AN ORGANIZATION that works to prevent unintentional injury to children welcomed the government's effort in Tagaytay City to prohibit children from riding motorcycles and encouraged other local government units to draw up similar road safety measures.

"Motorcycles are not a very safe vehicle. We discourage children from riding motorcycles, and if possible, they be put in a more protective vehicle," said Maria Perez, executive director of Safe Kids Philippines (SKP), an affiliate of the Safe Kids Worldwide.

Perez, in a phone interview on Thursday, said this is reference to an existing law in Tagaytay City that prohibits the carriage of children below 7 years of age on motorcycles, scooters, or bicycles.

According to the Tagaytay city ordinance, riding these type of vehicles "poses a clear and imminent danger to the life and safety" of a potential young victim.

"Tagaytay is a child-friendly city and due to the number of road accidents that involved motorcycles, especially at night, this [ordinance] is a preventive measure to protect the children," said Tagaytay's city information officer Lani Dizon.

The ordinance covers all city and national roads within Tagaytay and imposes a penalty from P500 to P5,000 and six months of imprisonment.

It has been in effect since December last year as approved by Mayor Abraham Tolentino.

In Manila, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority recently established motorcycle lanes to address the increasing number of motorcycles and related road accidents.

Tagaytay City is the only city with a clear mandate against children riding motorcycles, while the province of Cavite, to which Tagaytay belongs, issued in 2010 guidelines that prohibit children, 18 years old and below, from riding motorcycles, served as the SKP and local officials.

Chief Insp. Joel Asuncion, chief of the police Highway Patrol Group (HPG) in Cavite, said that could be the reason there were "fewer" motorcycle-related accidents since the months of last year in Cavite.

"Children are prone to fatal injuries. Even if they were helmets, their bodies are still very fragile," Asuncion said.

Still, according to the HPG's records in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), the most recent fatal accident along this line was in November in Rizal province when two boys, aged 7-9, met an accident while riding a single motorcycle. One of the boys died in the accident.

Perez said that while they support all efforts to protect children from motorcycle injuries, including a similar bill pending in Congress, they encourage actually recommends no age requirement on children riding the motorcycles.

The SKP children would be safe provided the child reaches the motorcycle foot pegs, the child is big enough to hold his arms around the driver's waist, and if the driver is wearing the rule.

"It's not a matter of age but the child's physical capability," Perez said.

She was warned that the longer the drive is, the more the child would be prone to falling off the vehicle, due to tiredness of falling asleep during the ride, based on SKP's recorded incidents.

LP has 333 new members in Bicol

By Joan Bacardon Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

DAET, Camarines Norte—The Liberal Party (LP) now has 333 new members in Bicol, mostly municipal officials, who joined in Camarines Norte who had jumped ship from the erstwhile dominant party Lakas-Kampi-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-Kampi-CMD).

The new LP members, who all came from Lakas-Kampi-CMD, constitute Mighty, town executives from the Liberal Government Secretary Jesse Robredo, the vice president of LP, the current administration party to which President Aquino belongs.

Leading the new LP members were Vice Gov. Jonah Pimentel and provincial Board Members Gerardo Quiñones and Rodolfo Emdin, who are under the tickets of Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Presided by Gov. Edgardo Tallado, who was awarded the LP ticket in the 2010 elections and the party's provincial chair, the new members came from the towns of Basud, Capalonga, Daet, Jose Panganiban, Labo, Mercedes, Paracale, San Lorenzo Ruiz, San Vicente, Sta. Elena, Talisay and Vinzons.

Not a single mayor from another party joined the such taking but not because they did not want to, said Tallado.

"Several of the mayors who belonged to the party of Lakas-Kampi-CMD and the two other mayors were independent.

Robredo shared Tallado's sentiment that leadership, saying that joining LP must not be likened to "changing clothes" but a commitment to follow the ideals of the party.

He said LP would not readily accept new members because if it would, 60 percent of Congress and local officials would be in LP.

There are 265 seats in the 15th Congress. Excluding the party-list representatives, 72 are LP members, 60 are Lakas-Kampi-CMD and 30 are Nacionalista Party's have both 30 representatives each.

The Nacionalista Party representative-mayor 22 seats, Pwersang Masang Pilipino has five seats, Bilisang Bagong Lipunan and Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino have one seat each, likewise with Partido ng Demokratikong Reporma-Lapiang Manggagawa. Three Congressional seats are independent and a local party.

Robredo said the real challenge for LP would be the 2013 elections as the term of Mr. Aquino would be ending by then. Slight more, he said they were preparing for the 2013 midterm elections.

"We know that in 2013 President Noynoy is still the chair of Liberal Party. But come 2016, we will know our true colors," he said to Filipinos.

35 journalists start from scratch after 'Sendong'

By Jes Aznar
blog.inquirer.net

THERE story started on a quiet Friday night, supposedly the end of another week at work and the start of a much-awaited weekend with loved ones, just nine days before Christmas Day. The place is Northern Mindanao.

Leonardo Abenir "Leng" Catales sat in front of a borrowed computer to write what had just happened. Tropical storm "Sendong" ripped through Misamis Oriental and other parts of Northern Mindanao.

As a provincial correspondent for various local and foreign media agencies, Leng had to report on the disaster. The storm had left hundreds dead, homeless and missing. The marginal were overflowing. The streets were flooded. Cadavers were floating along with heaps of trash. Casualties of human were all over.

But after three hours, Jhevon is words that came out were: "Cagayan de Oro City. By Greg Cornales, correspondent."

Cries of pain

Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011. A few hours before, Greg and his family rushed to the roof of their wooden house to escape the flash flood unleashed by the surging waves.

"They shouted for the water to subside. In the darkness, they could hear the cries of pain. People were shouting the names of missing loved ones. The screams for help went on for hours, struggling to be heard amid the sound of the howling wind."

Greg's house, the second floor of a two-story building, is along Burgos Street, barangay La Concepcion, one of the hardest hit areas in the province.

The morning after the flood, everything in Greg's house was covered with thick mud. The stench of garbage filled the air.

But Greg did not have enough time to clean the mud. He had a story to write. "But I did not know where to start," Cornales said.

Greg is one of at least 35 journalists from Cagayan de Oro and Iligan affected by the storm. Two Iligan-based journalists died while others lost everything.

Television correspondents Marilyn Macabenta is single, but she has two children, was already asleep when the floods came. She was in deep slumber, exhausted from the day's work. She was not all the things a feature about the Christmas Village in the center of town.

Her son roused her from sleep. "The house is flooded!" he said in a shaking voice. Their house is a small rented space in Gusa Village, Nitia plateau, Iligan City.

Marilyn had no time to pack. They rushed up to the roof. They could not open the door, as the waters were already high. The water was not yet enough to close the air-conditioning unit.

"I felt that we were going to die," she said.

From above, they could hear the cries of mercy—loud, agonizing and heartbreaking. Four mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, sons and daughters.

"We could not do anything. My two helpless my three," she said. As breaking heaved their cares, the shouts grew louder.

They were lucky as the house where the waters subsided. It was then that Marilyn realized that she had lost everything.

"When I went to my room, I saw my laptop floating," Marilyn said. "Gone."

Early 12 noon, Marilyn had to file a story. Her desk had called. She had to report something. Amidst the chaos, she managed to do a phone patch—a live report via telephone.

Television correspondent Marilyn Macabenta single, but she has two children, was already asleep when the floods came.

She was also lucky as her house was on a relatively high ground. Her children are still very fragile," Jhevon said.

Still, according to the MWSS records in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), the most recent fatal accident along this line was in November in Rizal province when two boys, aged 7-9, met an accident while riding a single motorcycle. One of the boys died in the accident.

Perez said that while they support all efforts to protect children from motorcycle injuries, including a similar bill pending in Congress, they

A GMA7 begins rebuilding a house after all the houses in this spot at Kauswagan, Cagayan De Oro City, were washed out after Tropical Storm "Sendong."

Missing

Lara Ferdinand lost her husband, Richard, and her home—stitched was a radio reporter and news anchor and she last time Lara heard her voice was at the height of Sendong's wrath.

They held on to a rope just outside their house in Bonbon Island in Iligan City but a shanty that had been washed away by the flood hit Richard. He was trailed off and was never seen again since that night.

Bonbon Island had been ripped apart by the flood. It is a village where hundreds of families lived and survived the daily lure is now a barren lifeless land. What remains are makeshift wooden shanties with candles and flowers for the dead.

(Editor's Note: The interviews in this story were conducted during a trip to distribute cash and material assistance donated by journalists and media groups for colleagues in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan—Sendong. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, together with other groups, organized the donation drive and relief distribution that started on Christmas Day. Those who would also help or the affected journalists may call the NUJP office in Quezon City at (02) 3702330.)

Ancestral land titles hamper John Hay segregation

BAGUIO CITY—The ancestral domain title issued to a tribe village inside Camp John Hay and other land titles owned by residents near the reservation have become a legal quandary for the government that tasked to segregate 13 barangays from the former American rest and recreation area.

A director of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC) asked the Office of the President to determine whether it would honor those titles as partial fulfillment of segregation, which was one of the 13 presidential directives the national government had agreed to undertake when Baguio conferred John Hay's privatization in 1994.

The JHMC, the estate managers of the Subic Conversion and Development Authority (SCDA), is obligated to enforce City Resolution No. 362, series of 1994, which enumerates the 24 conditions. Condition 14 requires the SCDA to exclude all affected barangays from the John Hay reservation.

Except for Barangay Scout Ramos, where former John Hay employees settled after losing their house here had not been able to start the segregation process for Barangays Happy Hallows, Hillside, Greenwater, Upper Dagsian, Loakan Proper, Loakan Liwanag, Loakan Apugan, Carpenter Hill, Village, Camp 7, Lucnab, Military Cut-off, Sto. Tomas and Lower Dagsian.

JHMC director Leandro Diego said the SCDA and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which issues ancestral land titles, are administered by the Office of the President, "so the issue could be settled on the President's level."

"If the President recognizes the certificates of ancestral domain titles (CADT) issued to barangay Happy Hallow [one of the John Hay villages above], find for segregation] and the certificates of ancestral land issued by the NCIP, we need to ask Irisig in Camp John Hay then their neighborhood and their home lots are as good as segregated," Diego said.

The segregation involves the survey and boundary delineation of the villages before President Aquino could issue a proclamation separating these communities from the coverage of the John Hay reservation, according to documents provided by the JHMC.

The segregated home lots would then be sold at a minimum rate to the present John Hay dwellers, said Taiget, who chairs the JHMC committee on the 13 resettlement sites.

Jamie Heine Shumeyen-Ag-bayani, JHMC president, announced on a Dec. 19 event with Baguio civic leaders, that P5 million had been allocated for the survey of the John Hay villages.

The proposed land delineation could be done quickly to many of these villages, particularly for uncontested lots. The process, however, does not take into account the existence of titled properties before segregation, he said

More Sports on A27-A31

Late SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

Tigers score in OT for 2-1 lead

Petron Blaze, Talk 'N Text break 1-1 tie today

By Jun Mariano

POWERADE coach Bo Perasol had thought of replacing Gary David with a defender in the most crucial juncture of this game. Good thing he changed his mind.

During the mini-damage late in regulation and in overtime, David carried the Powerade Tigers to a come-from-behind 104-99 victory in extra time over the Rain Or Shine Elasto Painters last night for a 2-1 advantage in their PBA Philippine Cup semifinal series at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

David unloaded 16 of his 21 points in the fourth period, including three free throws with 1.0 seconds left that forged the extra period, 97-all, then gave the Tigers the lead for good at 103-99.

"Bigtime ang Gary with a defensive player coming out mind," said Perasol. "But then I thought of keeping him there because I know he could win it for us in crunchtime."

Doug Kramer roared in a floater in the lane and David fouled off Gabe Norwood in a battle for possession of the Elasto Painters, who took a second straight loss after entering the quarter-all the best-of-seven series.

"It was a well-played game, except that we missed too many three-point shots," said Rain or Shine coach Yeng Guiao, whose Painters were 3 of 20 from that range.

The Elasto Painters were ahead in regulation, 97-94, but David was fouled by Paul Lee on top of the arc with 1.0 seconds left. David coolly sank the three free throws, tying the game and forcing coach Yeng Guiao to draw up one final play.

With three players draped all over him, David Lee looked it out to an open Beau Belga, who misshoot the potential game-clinching three with a fraction of a second remaining. The Tigers had the chance to finish the 15-Palmeiro off but Doug Kramer couldn't get a good will after slotting into the lane.

Meanwhile, Petron Blaze and Talk 'N Text break their 1-1 tie at 6:45 p.m. today in their [illegible] semifinal series.

Petron attacked the rim and got 13 second-chance points, scored 10 points off Talk 'N Text turnovers in the third period and then held on for a 93-89 win last Saturday.

POWERADE center Doug Kramer (center) battles Rain or Shine's Ryan Arana (partly hidden) and Gabe Norwood for the rebound in last night's Game 3 of the season's best-of-seven semifinal series at the Smart Araneta Coliseum. The season-by-the Tigers won the game, both CHRISTOPHER MARTIN sweeten to pull about, 2-1, after losing the series opener.

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B'water, RnW seek vital wins

By Cedell P. Tupas

BLACKWATER Elite and ReRi Nesfile Pipers try to boost their quarterfinal hopes when they clash with separate duels today in the 39th D-League Aspirants Cup at the Ynares Arena in Pasig.

The Elite tangle with the one-win Cebu Energy Drink at 12 noon, before the Revel Masters collide at 2 p.m. with a Prestige Tigers squad that has already secured its spot in the quarterfinals.

The Aces Makers are sensing slim hopes of clinching an outright semifinal berth after losing to Café France, 76-58, last Tuesday.

A win today and back-to-back losses by MLQU could give Prestige a playoff for the second spot in the Final Four.

The Aces Makers will settle for a twice-to-beat format in the quarterfinals if the Revel Warriors split their last two games.

The Revel Masters, sizing a 4-4 record, need to sweep their remaining assignments to secure their place in the next round.

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Editor Abelardo S. Wenday

DID YOU KNOW

LAST year, around 1.4 million devotees joined the procession for the Feast of the Black Nazarene, the patron saint of Quiapo, which is celebrated every Jan. 9. During the procession, the life-sized image of a dark-colored Christ is placed in a silver-plated carriage and pulled by two 50-meter-long abaca ropes and is brought by runners barefoot to the Quiapo Church and then to the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene.

Ashale Sinclair, Inquirer Research

FROM LESS SMOKE TO SMOKE-FREE

Pasig City gets tougher on nicotine addicts

By Nika Calleja

PASIG residents who smoke should learn to kick the habit within the next two years or move out of the city.

With the unanimous approval on Dec. 13 of an amended antismoking ordinance, the city has kicked off the gradual implementation of a tougher crackdown on people hooked on nicotine with the goal of making public areas in Pasig completely smoke-free in two years' time.

"Instead of rolling out city smokeless, we prefer our public areas to be smoke-free," Raquel Santiagogo, head of the city environment and natural resources office, told the Inquirer in a recent interview.

The 16-page amended ordinance, authored by Councilor Alexie Santiago, underwent almost a year of deliberations and revisions before it was approved by the city council.

Under the new and improved ordinance

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Stay away from fixers, QC gov't tells taxpayers

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE QUEZON City government has warned taxpayers not to deal with fixers who still abound despite efforts to eradicate them, according to the city's top executive.

Mayor Herbert Bautista said he had ordered the deployment of more security personnel and undercover police officers inside and outside the city hall compound to protect taxpayers from fixers who promise to speed up the payment process in exchange for a fee.

Bautista added that he had directed the Department of Public Order and Safety headed by former Quezon City Police District director Elmo San Diego, in cooperation with the city police, to assign more personnel to city hall, particularly near the offices which receive payments for business and real property taxes.

"Taxpayers need protection during payment of business and real property taxes because some of them might be tempted to deal with fixers just to avoid the long queues," he said.

Bautista further said that since 2010, the city government has banned fixers within the vicinity of government offices in the city as mandated by an ordinance.

Violators of the ordinance face a fine of P5,000 or a year of imprisonment or both, based on the discretion of the court.

Bautista said that for taxpayers who can account additions may reach more than P1 million, the city has put up a lounge exclusively for members of the so-called "Millionaires' Club" where they could relax as they wait for the processing of their payments.

According to the mayor, the city government is implementing a rollover policy in the collection of real property taxes this year.

City treasurer Edgar Villanueva said that "real property taxpayers should settle their obligations—not just the lot but also for the improvements built on the property.

Compared to previous years, Villanueva said that real property taxpayers could pay only for the land or improvements done on the property.

"But this year, all tax obligations should be paid before the issuance of a tax clearance," he explained.

Villanueva also said they plan to intensify their drive against delinquent taxpayers.

"We have added personnel to the delinquency section for the preparation of notices of delinquency as well as delivery boys who will be tasked to deliver notices of assessment," he added.

MADE FROM DISCARDS
A man turns out improvised wheels for pushcarts in a shop in Manila. The wheels are made from rusty tire materials.

Pray without littering, devotees asked

By Jayson T. Gamil

AN ENVIRONMENTAL group has appealed to all Black Nazarene devotees to pick up after themselves during the annual procession from Rizal Park to the Quiapo Church today.

In particular, EcoWaste Coalition called on food vendors to put aside their stalls to encourage buyers to dispose of their trash properly.

"We advise all food and beverage retailers to take full responsibility for their discards and not to pass on the garbage burden to consumers and communities," said Roy Alvarez, president of EcoWaste Coalition.

He added that vendors could also prepare pails for food leftovers which they could feed to their animals.

At the same time, he called on people to refrain from using Styrofoam and other plastic food containers because on previous occasions, most of the trash collected consisted of disposable food containers.

On Plaza Rizal's Day, the Manila City Department of Public Services collected 83.5 cubic meters of trash from the Plaza Miranda-Quiapo area, up from the usual 300 cubic meters moved on ordinary days.

"The preference of our Catholic devotion should rose, not scorn, the streets and sanitation conditions in Quiapo district in the annual saying goes, obedience is seen as godliness," Alvarez said.

GETTING READY TO MAKE A KILLING
A new gaudy image of the Black Nazarene on T-shirts which will be sold to the millions of Filipino devotees expected to participate in today's procession to mark its annual feast day.

Citizen's call 4467

Enforcer preys on drivers

A TRAFFIC enforcer is pocketing money from anyone driven at 100 drivers on San Juanico Boulevard.

Mercy Agcaoili, Cubao, Quezon City

Road repairs needed in Las Piñas

CALLING Mayor Imee Aguilar. Please repair the potholes on Naga Road, from intersection going to Golden Heaven Memorial Park.

Arnold Galindo, 46, Las Piñas

Dangerous advertisement

THERE is a tarpaulin for a note company posted in Nicolas Towers condo beside GMA 7 near the corner of Timog Extension and Edsa that poses a danger to residents and commuters. Hope you can help me relay the message to authorities.

Engr. Quezon City

Do-nothing barangay officials

TRAFFIC is heavy on the stretch of Rubio Street from Barangay Gongad to Barangay Puting Bato because of drop-off vendors. This has been a problem for many years but our barangay chair has not taken any action.

Billy Manar, Quezon City

Reckless easy riders

CALLING on Las Piñas Police: Please go after motorcycle riders without helmets and using mufflers on Naga Road.

Dad of Cielo Manuel of Westport. They are everywhere and they don't care about penalization.

Arnold Galindo, Las Piñas City

Residents take over street

SITE LOCATION: Street in Sauyo, Muñoz Edsa. A golfing operation because residents are taking over a portion of the road. Please help us.

Edna Jade Cruz, Sauyo, Muñoz Edsa City

Pasig acts vs smokers

From page A10

which will take full effect after two years, violators face stiffer sanctions and bigger fines. Even more important, it does away with the provision in the old ordinance which allows buildings to set aside areas which are exclusive to smokers.

Gradual phaseout

This means that within the next two years, all buildings in Pasig, including bars and other similar establishments, should phase out their designated smoking areas.

"We will first make the ordinance known to the public in the first two years and then proceed to its gradual implementation," Hernandez said.

In addition, Pasig enforcers will go after people caught smoking in the street, including sidewalks, because unlike Republic Act No. 9211 or the antismoking law, the amended city ordinance defines public places as areas frequented by people.

Hernandez said the city government's campaign against smoking was to its advantage because it spends around P35 million a year to treat respiratory diseases and other smoking-related illnesses compared to the P5 million it earns in taxes paid by cigarette firms.

Regular QC workers to get cash benefits

By Nancy C. Carvajal

STRICT good news for regular employees of the Quezon City Hall. The city government has ordered the release of additional cash bonus this month.

According to Mayor Herbert Bautista, regular workers will receive an incentive pay (productivity bonus) equivalent to 50 percent of their monthly salary. On top of this, employees with top performance marks will receive a productivity incentive of P3,000 each.

To top it all off, a uniform allowance of P4,000 each will be allocated to regular employees.

The benefits were listed in a memorandum circular issued recently by Bautista who said he had ordered the city budget department to prepare for the release of the cash benefits on time.

According to Bautista, the additional incentives will also be received by city-city's elected officials, including the P3,000 productivity pay.

Meanwhile, employees on vacation leave or under preventive suspension will not benefit from the cash gifts.

This rule applies to those who were suspended for more than 60 days within the second half of last year, he added.

On the other hand, the bonuses will be given out to contractual employees who reported for work from the first working day of January 2011 until the last working day of December 2011 provided they obtained a satisfactory performance rating during the whole year.

Barangay employees such as consultants may also receive a service reward pay of P2,000 if they rendered four months of service. He also issued notices with pay from the second half of 2011 and remains under contract with the city government as of Jan. 2 this year.

METRO
Citizen's Call
NEW
Overtakes on this road by a driver illegally using a "wang wang" (siren)?
Red tape stumped in your street despite your duty?
Street clippings have on the areas where you live?
Are you up in arms against the demolition of an unsightly house?
Stand by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
Got stuck in potholes?
Fed up with cursing and mocking neighbors?
Is there an everyday rule needed in your neighborhood?
Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?
JUST TEXT
4467
P.S.
INQUIRER

Foul play eyed in death of bank worker

By Kristine Felice Marquez

DESPITE evidence which seems to point to suicide, the police have not discounted foul play in the death of a financial executive on Wednesday night in Pasig City.

Case investigator SPO1 Melvin Mendoza told the Inquirer that there was a possibility that Mark Oliver San Pascual, 38, may have been killed although at press time, no motives have cropped up.

According to the police official, this was based on interviews with the victim's sisters, Simeon Magbanguiran, who said that his employee was happy and upbeat and did not show signs of depression before his death.

The victim worked for the Legaspi branch of Unionbank in Makati City.

"Pagdating namin, sabi nga nila, wala naman siyang problema. He was a happy person," Mendoza said.

He added that he was still waiting for the victim's wife, Katrina, to talk to authorities.

"She might shed light on the case but as of now, she is still in a state of shock," he said.

San Pascual was found dead in a condominium unit owned by his sister on Ortigas Avenue with a gunshot wound in the chest. Beside him was a 45-cal. pistol.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT
Brian Bentico (left) practices his fast-reading routine with another student, part of their preparation for a fast-reading competition.

Syria buries 26 victims of contested bombing

BEIRUT—Crowds waving Syria flags and pictures of President Bashar al-Assad gathered on Saturday to bury 26 people who the authorities said were killed by a suicide bomber at a busy Damascus crossroads.

The opposition Syrian National Council has accused the government of staging Friday's explosion in city to bolster its contention that it is fighting foreign-backed "terrorism," not a popular predemocracy movement.

A cortege of ambulances, lights flashing, bore the flag-draped coffins of victims to a Damascus mosque after driving through streets lined with mourners, state television showed.

Crowds chanted: "The people want Bashar al-Assad" and "One, one, one, the Syrian people are one!"

The blast, which also wounded 63 people, came before an Arab League committee meets in Cairo on Sunday to discuss the future of an Arab monitoring mission that has spent two weeks checking whether Syria is keeping its pledge to halt a 10-month crackdown on opponents of four decades of Assad family rule.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani, who heads the committee, told Al Jazeera TV the members should not stay to "waste time" since Syria was not implementing the deal.

He said the Syrian army had not left cities as required and the killing had not stopped since the observers began work on Dec. 26. "With great regret, the news is not good," he said.

Security forces trying to crush anti-Assad protests around Syria killed four civilians in Homs on Saturday, and three people died in Hamata, Reuters reported. Activists said 20 people died on Friday.

Scores of people have been reported killed since the observers arrived, adding to a death toll that the United Nations says has already topped 5,000 since the uprising erupted in March, inspired by Arab revolts elsewhere.

A Syrian army colonel said to be a defector announced by Al Jazeera he had delivered to protest against the crackdown on protests. He was flanked in video footage by 13 men in uniform, though the station said up to 30 defected with him in Hama.

Despite the Qatari leader's criticism, Arab League sources and Arab foreign ministers were likely to reaffirm support for the mission, swearing calls for a tougher approach from Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal and others.

The Jordanian monitors arrived in Damascus on Saturday, bringing the total number in the mission to 165, Reuters said.

Qatar is proposing to invite UN ambassadors and human rights experts to help draft more intrusive terms whereby Syria is implementing the League's plan, sources at the Arab League said.

A source said the ministers meeting on Sunday might request that UN staff helping the monitors be drafted.

League sources said the foreign ministers, who will consider an initial report by the monitors, would also discuss ways of allowing the mission to work more independently of Syrian authorities.

Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby, in a statement posted online, condemned the "terrorist explosion" in Damascus and voiced "great concern at the escalation of violence in Syria."

Syrian Interior Ministry Deputy Ali-Bhaar had promised earlier to hit back with an "iron fist" for the blast, which he said killed 26 people, including 15 who could not be identified.

Anti-Assad protests are scarce in Damascus, which the Arab League has suspended for failing to implement its peace plan under Syria is a major powerbroker in the region, allied with Iran and the Lebanese Shi'ite Hezbollah armed group.

Hezbollah, which fought Israel to a 2006 war, blamed the blast on "evil American forces and those under its control in the region, including Israel" and its Sunni supporter of resistance forces against the Zionist enemy Israel and the West."

US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said that, as with previous attacks, Syria had blamed "just about everybody": the opposition, al-Qaida and the United States.

"At the present time we can't say one way or the other how this happened but what we can say is that, obviously, we condemn the attack," the said. Reuters

DEMONSTRATORS protest against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad after Friday prayers in Idleb, on Jan. 6. AFP/FILE

Lull in strikes by US drones aids militants

WASHINGTON—A nearly zero monthlull in US drone strikes in Pakistan has helped embolden al-Qaeda and several Pakistani militant factions to regroup, increase attacks against Pakistani security forces and threaten to destabilize northern Afghanistan, US and Pakistani officials say.

The insurgents are increasingly taking advantage of tensions ratcheted up by the border clashes that killed two dozen Pakistani soldiers in two border outposts, plunging relations between the two countries to new depths. The CIA, bypassing normal ranking nuances, has been telling Pakistan complexes a wide-ranging review of its covert relationship with the United States, has not conducted a drone strike since mid-November.

Diplomats and intelligence analysts say the pause in CIA missile strikes—the longest in Pakistan in more than three years—is offering the most genuine freedom of maneuver militants have enjoyed since the Bush administration launched its campaign against Americans in Afghanistan.

Other militant groups operating in sprawling Pakistani forces. Just last week, Taliban insurgents killed 15 security soldiers who had been kidnapped in retaliation for the death of a militant commander.

The spike in violence in the tribal areas...up nearly 12 percent in 2011 from the previous year, according to a new independent report...comes amid reports of negotiations between Pakistani and Taliban leaders, and some local Taliban factions, although the military denies that such talks are taking place.

A logistics operation with the Haqqani terrorist group, which uses sanctuaries in Pakistan to carry out attacks on allied troops in Afghanistan, said militants could still have drones flying surveillance missions, day and night. "There are still drones, but there is no lost anymore," he said in a telephone interview. The logistics operative said Taliban sent his sales to count more freely.

Overall, drone strikes in Pakistan dropped to 64 last year, compared with 117 strikes in 2010, according to The Long War Journal, a website that monitors the attacks. Analysts attribute the decrease to a dwindling number of senior al-Qaida leaders and a pause in strikes last year after the arrest in January of Raymond Davis, a CIA security contractor who killed two Pakistanis; the Navy SEAL raid in May that killed Osama bin Laden; and the US airstrike on Nov. 26.

The pause in drone operations at its Shamsi air base closed after that airstrike, but CIA drones flying from bases in Afghanistan continue to fly surveillance missions over the tribal areas. The drones would be cleared to fire on a senior militant leader, based on credible intelligence and minimal risk to civilians, US officials said. But for now, the Predator and Reaper drones are holding their fire, the longest pause in Pakistan since July 2008.

"It makes sense that a lull in US operations...coupled with ineffective Pakistani efforts, might lead the terrorists to become complacent and try to regroup," one US official said. "We know that al-Qaida's leaders were constantly telling the US counterterrorism operations into account, spending considerable time and resources on movements and protecting their communications to try to stay alive." New York Times News Service

The U.S. MH-6 Little Bird helicopter, intended to fly cargo missions to remote outposts where roadside bombs threaten road convoys. AP

Pilotless chopper makes debut in Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan—The US military is testing a revolutionary new drone for its arsenal, a pilotless helicopter intended to fly cargo missions in remote outposts where frequent roadside bombs threaten armed convoys.

Surveillance drones for monitoring enemy activity and armed versions for launching airstrikes have become a trademark of America's wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. But this is the first time a chopper version designed for transport has been used operationally.

Two unmanned models of the Kaman K-MAX helicopters used in trials of the campaign infantry and 6 Marines are conducting a 6-month evaluation program for the new craft at Camp Dwyer, a Marine Corps outpost in the Garmsir district of southern Helmand Province.

The craft have flown 20 times—most missions since the unusual flight on Dec. 17, said Maj. Kyle O'Connor, the officer in charge of the detachment. They have delivered nearly 10 tons of cargo, mainly in thousands of blankets to Iraq and spare parts needed at the far-flung operating bases.

Afghanistan is a highly mined country and the possibility of improvised explosive devices is always a problem surveying cargo overland in a convoy," O'Connor said.

"Every load that we can take off a ground convoy reduces the danger and risk that our marines, soldiers, and sailors are faced with," he said. "With an unmanned helicopter, even the skyway is taken out of harm's way."

The Marines from Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 2 load the missions and deliver the cargo two-combat drop zones, while contractors operate and maintain the two aircraft.

The craft's onboard computer uploads the mission plans, enabling them to fly on autopilot from an operator's base, control movement progress and can stop and override the autopilot for manual operation if any problems occur, or if the drone must be redirected in mid-flight. AFP

US Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (right) at a Houston hospital on May 17, 2011 and during a 2010 appearance in Tucson. AP/FILE

A year later, horror of 'The Event' lingers

TUCSON, Ariz.—January has come again to Tucson. The pleasant days all but demand a hike or a bicycle ride. The cool evenings coax the Sonora Desert jackrabbits in a conservative magenta. And, for some, the late nights bring to mind a supermarket called Safeway, of all things, and an echoing pop. Pop, pop, pop, pop.

A year later, Nancy Ostrosendel, a piano teacher who drives a magnificent '57 Chevy, has hair's chest still. She and her husband, Phil, had just checked out at Register 1, with the friendly cashier, Beverly, ringing up their food, sidekick, dog food and Diet Pepsi. Then came those pops, which made her think that another supermarket employee, a keyboard player, was popping balloons in the floral section. Pop, pop, pop, pop.

Suddenly, her husband, a thoroughbred veterinarian, was hurling her on a side exit, let's go, let's go, no time to greet her friend at the checkout line, and as she was being rushed out, the new another woman picked up two children in soccer uniforms and carry them out the exits. She also noticed that a bodyload explained the popping, as though life's soundtrack had been abruptly shut off.

On Jan. 8, 2011, it is no secret that will never left away in Tucson, authorities say that a college dropout with evident mental illness named Jared L. Loughner fired 31 rounds from his 9-millimeter pistol before a New Jersey-style jughandle of his. Six people were killed, including a federal judge and a 9-year-old girl, and 13 others were wounded, several grievously—among them Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., who had been holding a Meet Your Congress, constituent event just outside the supermarket's doors.

As Loughner, 23, undergoes evaluations while awaiting trial, and Giffords, 41, slowly, miraculously, recovers from a gunshot wound to the head, the city of Tucson is embracing that weekend to getting beyond those echoing pops. There are festivals of art and celebrations of democracy, a walk through a park named after that 9-year-old girl, Christina-Taylor Green, and a hike along a trailhead named after another victim, Gabriel Zimmerman. On Saturday night, Giffords is supposed to attend a candlelight vigil.

But others who were directly touched by The Event, as it is sometimes called, will mark the anniversary in their own private ways, traveling or staying put, changed, and what has not.

The said dinner who dropped off Loughner at the supermarket will drive his cab. The doctor who saw the bloodshirt settled right before him will wonder about the path in his practice. And the barbecue restaurant owner, Gabe Zimmerman, will keep and play the piano because, she says, music "has a way of working out the knots."

The said driver, John Murino, 61, now calls himself the "unlucky guy." But that Saturday morning, he was just another citizen grabbing up another late —a young man in a hoodie—and driving him five and-a-half miles to the hallway.

The man wanted change from his $20 bill for the $14.35 fare, so Murino reversed him to the supermarket's service desk and collected a 75-cent tip. When the customer asked to shake his hand goodbye, the cabbie obliged, and received the man's nursing palm.

Since then, Murino has traded in his Ford Crown Victoria cab for a Hyundai hoopty because mileage, he says. And, occasionally, a customer will ask, "Aren't you the ...?"

"Yes, I am," answers the unlucky cabbie.

Minutes after Murino left, his successor, Loughner, opened fire, the police say standing near the supermarket's grocery a couple more and gunned with an elected official. Among those who had gone to see Giffords was Steven Kuyle, a former emergency room doctor who had moved on to hospice work, and his companion, Laura Rosenzweig.

STYLE

Russian church urges action on vote fraud claim

MOSCOW—The Russian Orthodox Church continued what appeared to be an effort to get the authorities to address Russians' grievances over the political system, with Patriarch Kirill I, the church's leader, saying in a televised interview that it would be "a very bad sign" if the country's leaders failed to heed recent protests over perceived election fraud.

The church, a powerful force in Russia, made a point of announcing that the patriarch would be speaking Saturday while his Christmas Day in Russia.

The announcement, made Thursday, came just 10 minutes after the Interfax news agency released a report on an essay by a senior church official, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, that made the same points as the patriarch, but in starker terms: it said that the authorities could be "slowly eaten alive" if they did not respond to Russians' concerns.

Church leaders have been walking a careful line since the parliamentary elections on Dec. 4, avoiding the appearance of response to the protesters and affirming their right to demonstrate, but Patriarch Kirill has not questioned the legitimacy of the elections or criticized Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin.

Still, the drumbeat of implicit criticism has been surprising from the church, which has been a strong supporter of the government, and the patriarch's statements Saturday appeared to keep the pressure on.

"If the authorities remain insensitive to the expression of protest, this is a very bad sign, a sign of the authorities' inability to adjust," Patriarch Kirill said in the interview, which was broadcast on Russia 1, one of Russia's state television channels.

He also warned that a crackdown on critics would incite serious calls for the government during the Soviet era. "Every person is a free society must have the right to express his opinion, including disagreement with the actions of the authorities," the patriarch said.

Most of the complaints about very falsifications have been against Putin's governing party United Russia, which, despite the allegations of fraud, suffered heavy losses.

Change is needed, Patriarch Kirill said, but revolution must be avoided at all costs.

"If demonstrations about of the 1917 revolution had ended in the destruction of political power and 'had not led to a bloody revolution and a threefold war, Russia would have had a population of more than 300 million and would have challenged or maybe even surpassed the United States from the point of view of economic development." New York Times News Service

The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Quiazo

At 30, Princess Kate tiptoes into the royal limelight

LONDON—Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, turns 30 on Monday after a year-long nine months of hen-key royal engagement as she invites a gentle-to-wonder into royal life alongside her husband Prince William.

The sidelines are full of rumors that William's curvy-loving brother Prince Harry and Catherine's high-profile younger sister Pippa Middleton are preparing a birthday party for the woman who will one day be queen.

But the royal family insists the occasion will be "low-key and private."

Regardless of the glitz or celebration of the party as the events her fourth decade the former commoner Kate Middleton—a city number of appearances compared to other members of the royal family.

If she is rarely seen, she is heard even less. Catherine does not, yet, make speeches.

Yet she enjoys huge popularity and those members of the public who have seen her report clear she is happy to chat and try out the daughter of a former pilot and flight assistant is without airs and graces.

When she made her first appearance with the royal family at their traditional Christmas Day church service, there was no doubt that Catherine, in a plum-colored coat and hat, was the star the crowd had come to see.

This month, following royal tradition, she announced which charities she will support, and made a commitment to become a volunteer scout leader, mainly near to her Anglesey base.—AFP

PRINCESS CATHERINE

Iranians recount 6 weeks of fear with Somali pirates

ABOARD THE FISHING VESSEL AL MULAHI in the Gulf of Oman—Late Thursday afternoon, as the US destroyer Kidd loomed alongside this hijacked Iranian dhow, the warship's loudspeaker issued a command in Urdu to the dhow's frightened Urdu-speaking crew.

US sailors stood ready weapons in hand. If you have dangerous aboard, the order boomed, put them where we can see them, on the roof of your wheelhouse.

Fifteen Somali pirates were also on board Al Mulahi, crouched and cowered on the very vessel they had seized by November to use as their mother ship. They had knives, a pistol and four assault rifles. But they did not speak Urdu. For a moment, the captors depended on their captives. They asked their former hostages what the US sailors had just said.

One of the hostages, Khaled Abdelkhaleq, answered without pause: "They said they are about to blow this ship up."

The pirates panicked. Their unity broke down. Each man hoped, curiously, to surrender, find cover or hide. Discarding their weapons, nine of them retreated into a small hold between the wheelhouse. Six more huddled near the open bow.

Soon armed US sailors climbed aboard. They spotted the six Somalis on the bow, who did not resist. As more of the boarding team streamed over the side, the fourteen hostages pointed to where the remaining pirates were hiding. The sailors pulled those men out, one by one, into the light and forced them face down onto the deck.

Al Mulahi was secured. The fourteen hostages had been saved without a shot being fired.

In interviews by Iran journalists from The New York Times who spent Thursday night on the ex-stand vessel, the former hostages, the captured pirates and the US sailors guarding them told of a drama on the open ocean: Naval vessels, helicopters and inflatable boats; five hours of a pirate attack and then rummaged on the pirates' mother ship, finding 13 hostages who had expected to die.

The operation was a geographical thriller, as the aircraft carrier John C. Stennis, which had been stationed out to sea in the region by major frontier-diplomat officials on Tuesday, answered on Thursday by swiftly organizing the rescue of Iranian hostages not far from Iran's coast.

But the rescue was also the dramatic finale to a nine-month ordeal for the hostages. To survive more than six weeks after their 85-foot silhouette was captured as gunpoint and converted to a platform for attacks against international shipping, the fishermen relied on table scraps, prayer, camaraderie and, in the end, duplicity.

Their troubles began in November, shortly after Al Mulahi left its home port of Chabahar, Iran, on a voyage intended to last several weeks. Its captain, Mahmud Ramzi, was seeking marlin, which he said could fetch about $1.50 a pound. He hoped to fill the vessel's freezers with 5 or 6 tons of fish before returning home.

But pirates were at sea, too, and hoping for a far larger score.

Not long after leaving port, while steaming in the Omani zone, Al Mulahi was approached by a smaller Iranian dhow, the fishing vessel Hayati. Unbeknownst to Al Mulahi's crew, the Hayati had been hijacked by Somali pirates. When it came alongside, the pirates appeared on its deck, and fired rifles into the air. Now they had Al Mulahi, too.

The pirates' intentions became clear immediately. The Hayati was almost out of fuel, rendering it useless as a mother ship from which the pirates could mount attacks in skiffs against passing ships they hoped to hold for multimillion-dollar ransoms.

The Somalis transferred their equipment onto Al Mulahi. Hayati, said two of the Hayati's crew members had been killed by the pirates, and the rest were exhausted and terrified. But before Al Mulahi pulled away, the Hayati's fishermen apologized for carrying the pirates to another boat, and for the lies that they were going five days as Al Mulahi's crew was being taken hostage.

Younes, who had been captured by Somali pirates while on a different fishing vessel three years ago, understood the latest something of a fishing crew's helplessness when faced by gunmen at sea. He had endured 25 days then that, he said, and escaped when the fishermen overpowered their pirates on the vessel when the five others left on a skiff to hunt for ships.

As his new period of captivity began, his mind was working.

Younes gave his crew an order: "Stay comply" he said. With time, they might get a chance.

The pirates, perhaps sensing an obedient crew, did not beat them, the hostages said. They ordered Al Mulahi to set a course for Kandhala, a port on the northern Somali coast.

After they arrived and anchored the dhow, many of the pirates were ashore, leaving guards and bringing on food, water and, with time, more gunmen to prepare for a high-seas hunt.—NYTIMES

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The Smart pays less for the same service SMARTE Smart always prevails Be Smart

Fil-Singaporean rules PH Am Open by 2 shots

CHAMPIONS Lovelyn Sulogaste and Gregory Poe show their trophy and prizes from Globe after the rain-hit final round. STORY ON P2 AND P3

By Marang R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, Laguna—Gregory Poe played his worst round but the Fil-Singaporean held on to capture the Philippine Amateur Open golf championship yesterday by two shots over Arnie Cadoo at Canlubang's North course here.

With misty morning rain turning the par-72 course longer and soft, Poe went birdie-bogey and lost his six-stroke overnight advantage before settling down to wind up with a seven-over-par 79 and a four-day 287 tally.

Cadoo, who fought Poe blow-to-blow in the first two rounds only to stumble with a 75 on Saturday, retained a second straight 74 to finish second, with 42nd Hendrik sorting the third another stroke behind at 289 after a 76.

Mendiola, a former champion who, like Cadoo, started the day six shots off the lead, pulled level with the eventual champion after five, who had earlier rounds of 70-69-68, double-bogeyed the par-3 13th.

But the standout from Get Money, who shares second the 11th, fell out of the lead with a bogey on the 12th before taking a four-shot 7 on the par-4 15th hole, where he needed three shots to get out of a fair-

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Heat scorch Nets as Lebron returns

NEWARK, New Jersey—LeBron James returned to the Miami Heatup and scored 23 of his 32 points in the first quarter, setting up the Heat's 101-99 victory over the New Jersey Nets in the NBA on Saturday despite still being without Dwyane Wade.

Mario missed his third straight game with a bruised left foot, but James had the game under control by the time his All-Star teammate entered at his seat on the bench.

James made his first seven shots and showed no effects from the sprained left ankle that forced him to miss a game. The NBA's leading scorer added nine assists and seven rebounds.

Chris Bosh added 26 points after a slow start as the Heat won their third straight and ran their NBA-best record to 30-5.

Kris Humphries notched a career high with 25 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Nets, who shot just 33.7 percent.

In Dallas, Steve Carter and Ian Mahinmi had 13 points each as Dallas handed New Orleans its sixth consecutive loss, 96-84.

Carter and Mahinmi led a balanced scoring attack for the Mavericks, who won their fourth straight at home and had six players scoring in double figures.

Al Farouq Aminu had 13 points and 12 rebounds to lead New Orleans, which was without three players who are in its regular rotation. Jason Smith missed the game after the death of his grandmother. vs. Guard Mo Gordon. Demand right knee) and forward Trevor Ariza (groin strain) were also out.

In suburb Hills, Michigan, Antawn Hendrickson scored 22 points to lead New York to an early 103-99 win over Detroit.

Mike Miller added 16 for the Knicks, who led 56-42 at halftime and by 29 after three. Hilfiky has scored 27 points over his past two games after scoring just seven through New York's first six.

Brandon Knight led the Pistons with 19 points.

Denver guard Rodney Stuckey sat out with a groin injury and the Pistons were also without forwards Austin Daye and Charlie Villanueva, who had sore ankles.

In Houston, Kevin Durant hit a jumper with 22 seconds left and nailed two free throws to give Oklahoma City a win over Houston, 99-93.

Durant finished with 27 points and six rebounds, while Russell Westbrook added 27 points and six assists for the Thunder.

Luis Scola had a season-high 28 points and seven rebounds for the Rockets, who have lost four straight games.

AP, REUTERS, Sports, 102, Ball, 36, Bosh, 13, Wright, 12, Stuckey, 11, Aminu, 10, Mahinmi, 10, Jones, 10, Hickson, 7

FRAME: Heat's superstar forward LeBron James drives for a layup over New Jersey forward Kris Humphries in Saturday's game. REUTERS

Tsonga nails Qatar plum; Murray up in Brisbane

DOHA—Jo-Wilfried Tsonga shrugged off a slow start to down Gael Monfils, 7-5, 6-3, in an all-French final at the Qatar Open on Saturday and give himself a confidence boost for the Australian Open.

The ninth-ranked Tsonga, who reached the final after Roger Federer withdrew injured, left Sunday's 5-1 chair behind his rhythm, coming to the net more often and reeling off the final four games to win the first set.

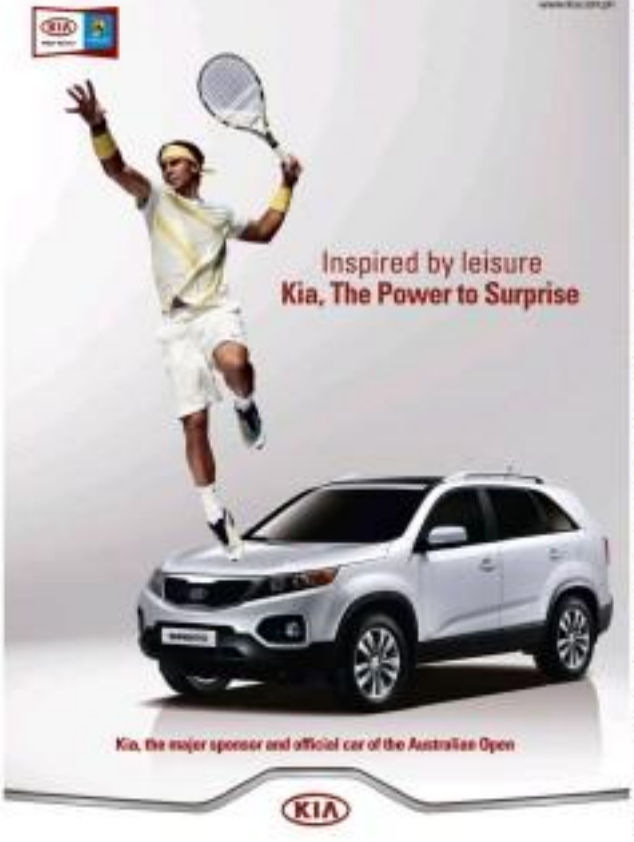
The momentum carried over into the second set, when Tsonga kept Monfils off-balance with his powerful forehand and occasional drop volleys. Tsonga broke Monfils to go up 4-2 and won the match when Monfils hit a backhand long. He set after a long rally.

TSONGA AFP

"At the beginning, it was bit difficult. He broke me very early and it was tough," Tsonga said. "But in my head, everything was right. OK, I'm one break down, I will continue to play my game and make him run a lot. I think it was good solution. After that, he was his mind of that."

In Brisbane, Andy Murray, one tournament into a partnership with new coach Ivan Lendl, warmed up for the Australian Open with a 6-1, 6-3 win over third-seeded Alexandr Dolgopolov to the Brisbane International final.

Lendl was at courtside when the 24-year-old first lifted the Roy Emerson Trophy. AP



Fil-Singaporean tops PH Am Open

From page A17

...way fashion.

"I just stayed patient out there and tried to not let myself feel down after shooting a 40 on the front nine), " Foo, whose Filipino mother hails from Quezon City, told reporters.

"The last (Ian Clyde and Aldus) got unlucky helped me win," added Foo, who pulled up his first major victory.

Delayed start

Foo admitted to having difficulty getting on stride down...after the rains delayed the start by almost an hour to around 11:30 in the morning.

Carbo and Montilla pounced on the chance only to lose ground in the end.

Carbo, the 14-year-old ICTSI scholar in the United States, birdied the par-5 17th to nip ICTSI Cavalcade teammate Montilla for second.

"Something went on a little bit of everything in my game," Carbo said. "My round was very much like yesterday. I just couldn't get it going, though I did save [par] that hard at 40."

Lovelyn Dalogdog shared one with a 71 and rallied from two strokes down to win the women's side of the tournament presented by Globe Telecom, Pancake House and Asphalt Express.

Golagolo totalled 219 for 54 holes, winning over Sadie Cimen, who fired a 72, by six strokes.

Both Foo and Golagolo won two-round trip tickets to Singapore and Blackberry phones from Globe.

Foo, who won the Singaporean Junior Am championship last year on his last year of eligibility in the event, said he is so proud to win the national title of his mother's country.

The 18-year old added that he would be finding less time for golf now month as never his mandatory 22-month stint with the Singaporean Army.

"It was really tough for me out there in the back nine," Montilla, the 2010 runner-up said in Filipino. "I had all the bad breaks."

Going to the 13th tee needing two-by-one, Montilla found the fairway bunker on his drive. What was supposed to be a routine long blast to the green ended as it crossed his fairway. His ball ended up in a buried lie after failing to clear the lip.

Impossible bunker lie

Given that impossible lie, Montilla needed two more shots to get out.

Jeremy Ng, another Singaporean, fired a 73 for 291 with Korean super Choi Jae-seung shooting a 70 for 293.

The tournament was supported by Tandray Distillers, Inc. as major sponsor and supported by Club Cat, Pacquero, Golf Depot, Autobah and Callaway with Acacia Hotels as official hotel and Telefast as official ball.

The final scores:

AMATEUR OPEN CHAMP
ARIP, JEC - 70-73-73-75-291 -3
Ng, J - Carbo - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Montilla, ICTSI - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Ng, Chee - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Cimen, Sadie - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Golagolo, Ramon - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Foo, JW - Singapore - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Quilban, Lester - 70-73-73-75 - 291 -3
Dalogdog, Lovelyn - 71-73-73-75 - 292 -2
R. Dungca - 74-68-73-77 - 292 -2
Ong, Jay - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 70-73-73-78 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 70-73-73-78 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
WOMEN: Dalogdog, Lovelyn - 71-73-73-75 - 292 -2
Cimen, Sadie - 72-73-73-75 - 293 -1
Ng, Chee - 73-73-73-75 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 70-73-73-78 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ong, Jay - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Dungca, Chee - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 70-73-73-78 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ong, Jay - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Dungca, Chee - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ang, Ace - 70-73-73-78 - 294 -2
Dejos, Antonio - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Ong, Jay - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2
Dungca, Chee - 74-71-73-76 - 294 -2

Stricker paces Hawaii tilt by 5

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Steve Stricker made even the long putts look like tap-ins on his way to a 10-under 63 on Saturday, giving him a five-shot lead halfway through the PGA Tour's season-opening Tournament of Champions.

Stricker played the final five holes in 5-under, which included a 3-wood...up the hill and into the sun—that settled about 12 feet away for eagle. That allowed Stricker to get a five-shot lead from Webb Simpson, and from the amazing eagle-eagle finish by Kevin Na.

Stricker went at 13-under 131, two shots off the 36-hole record that Ernie Els set in 2003.

Na, six strokes back at 9-under, wasn't even part of the picture until he holed a 9-iron from 221 yards for eagle on the 16th hole. Then he hit 3-wood down the hill on the par-5 18th to about 18 feet for another eagle. AP

Azkals coach stays upbeat despite latest loss

CF RACING'S Daniel Garcia forwards scores on a shot deflected by Filipino goalkeeper Edward Sacapano in Saturday's match. ROMANDEO

By Cedelf R. Tapao

PHILIPPINE Azkals coach Michael Weiss doesn't see any cause for alarm following the 3-5 defeat of the Azkals-Alumnos to Spanish Tercera division side CF Internacional de Madrid in a charity match Saturday night at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

It was the second straight loss for the Azkals, who also absorbed a 7-4 whipping from the Los Angeles Galaxy last December in another exhibition game.

The AFC Challenge Cup is two months away and Weiss, who watched the game from the grandstand, said he still has enough time to whip the side into the best possible form for the eight-nation tournament that stakes a spot in the 2015 Asian Cup.

The Azkals will face North Korea, Tajikistan and India in the March 9 to 13 Challenge Cup in Kathmandu, Nepal.

While Weiss was not impressed by the performance of the Azkals, particularly in the opening half, the German mentor said it was understandable against the Spanish team "that has been playing the past three years in the best footballing country in the world."

The match dubbed "Sth Kaine Nag-Iisa" was for the benefit of victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong." The charity game reportedly raised P2 million, including the 35,000 euros that was turned over by CF Madrid to the Philippine National Red Cross.

James Younghusband swayed a shaven with a solid header in the 42nd minute off a cross from Chiefly Caligdong—a goal that Weiss said only shows the tremendous spirit within the team.

"It was a good result, a good reflection of where we stand," Weiss said. "It only means we have a lot of work to do."

The Azkals begin their preparations for the Challenge Cup on Tuesday and Weiss stressed the importance of having the players based in the country train together.

Defender Rob Gier is also arriving on Tuesday but Weiss said he is still unsure if Chris Greatwich is willing to join the team.

Weiss also revealed that Dennis Iqbal, an experienced 30-German midfielder, has expressed his desire to join the squad.

MMTLBA OPENING

League honors former aces; Salud main guest

SALUD

PBA commissioner Chito Salud will be one of the special guests when the Metro Manila Thrift Line Basketball Association launches its 42nd edition on Saturday at the Ynares High School gym.

The invisible executive of Asia's first professional basketball league will be joined by officials and supporters of Grace Christian College—the team's host—in the opening ceremony where former stars of the premier Fil-Chinese league will be honored.

Dr. James Tan, the president of Grace Christian College, chairs the MMTLBA which will have the theme "Moving Forward, Achieving Unity" this year.

Among the former stars who made big contributions to the league's growth are Raffaniano "Rey" Go, Lim Eng Beng, Sonny Go, Alfredo Chuk, Woody Co, TY Tang, Joseph Yee, Chris Sy, Christian Lumagui and Artie Tang.

Chua, who entered Tang Tandang in the championship in the new behind PBL before handling several teams in the pro league, has been tapped as the commissioner of the six-season duration October.

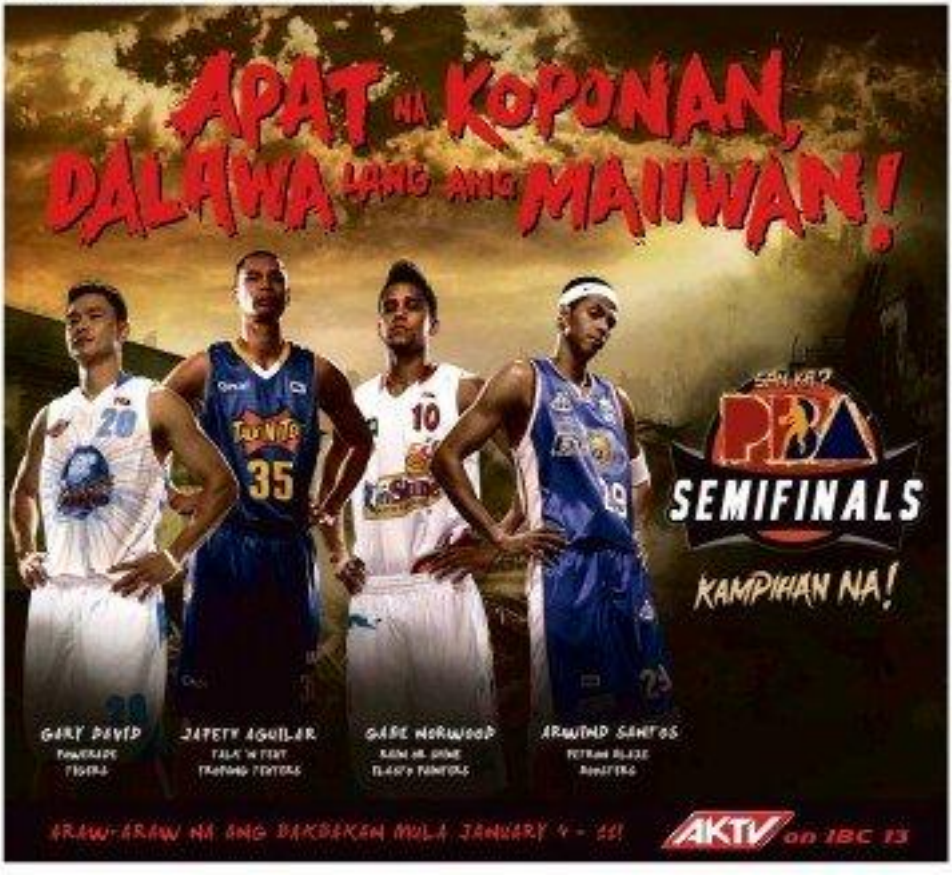
MMTLBA chair Bonnie Tan of the host school said the league will also host competitions in the Aspirants and Girls High Schools's classes which will also fire off Saturday.

The 1:30 p.m. showdown between Xavier School, which is seeking a fifth straight title, and Chiang Kai Shek College will highlight the three-game schedule of the event presented by Regan Industrials Sales Inc. and World Balance and supported by Tiger, Burlington, Summit Drinking Water, EDO Pipe, Supreme Steel Pipe, Superior Pipe and Asia Water Spa. Molten is the official game ball.

Backstopped by Youth Olympic Games veteran Jason Tang, the XS Golden Stallions bounced back from a shocking Game 1 lost to beat Hope Christian High School in their 2011 best-of-three championship series and claim their 10th Aseaan championship.

Though CKSK has yet to serve a title since the departure of Justin Chua in 2008, it remains as the winningest squad in league history with 14 championships.

Other teams competing in the six-week tournament are St. Stephen's High School, St. Jude Catholic School and Ursa High School.



Anatomy of a debacle

Philippine sports is in dire straits, and the country's disastrous campaign in the last SEA Games only exposed the calvary the Filipino athlete has had to surmount to achieve parity with his Asian peers

By the Inquirer Sports Staff

THERE is something fundamentally wrong with our national sports psyche when even political leaders perfume glaring sporting embarrassments with ignorant praise, writes the esteemed sports commentator Recah Trinidad.

Sometime last month, Malacañang came to the rescue of the country's beleaguered sports leaders by calling the tainted performance of the Filipino athletes in the 26th Southeast Asian Games as inclusive as to triumph of sorts.

Said presidential spokesperson Edwin Lamboy: "My congratulate our Philippine contingent for their noble performance ..."

Lamboy was rebuking, of course, to the Philippines' shameful, terrible three (the pinnacle of regional sporting glory to 22958 to 66628 prize overall in the Indonesia SEA Games last November.

"(By the government, which spent P300 million for sports last year, one not that's a waste of a debacle nor a waste of public funds) dollar logic.

The Palace statement betrayed the government's insensitivity to the role sports plays in nation building and to the decay that has gnawed at the foundation of local sports in recent years, according to Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, science chairman of PH sports.

"It is unfortunate that all three [the country's sporting statesmen] happened because the government, our sports leaders, and even big corporations with the ability to support our sports programs have become insensitive to the plight of our athletes and the poor state of sports," said Escudero.

The country's recent athletic performance in Indonesia, the latest in a series of international debacles for the country's Filipino athletes, stirred a hornet's nest of ironic. What's wrong with the country's sports program? What triggered the latest skid?

There were several obvious culprits. According to the athletes themselves, the main issue are the shortage of cash to fund their training and other in world-class competitive missions, as well as the systemic disputes now not among sports leaders. In the Indonesian saga, the ill-prepared, unfocused Filipinos suffered in silence and took it on the chin.

Bruised and humbled

"They left Manila with a good measure of confidence. They returned from Indonesia bruised and humbled. Collectively, they had failed again in the Games, the lowest form of meltdown in international competition where standards poked significantly compared with the Asian Games or the Olympics.

Waging a little battle against the turtle's regular pace, only two Filipino athletes contributed to its worst windup since 1979, when the country first joined the regional sporting spectacle.

As late as the eve of the Games, officials of both the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), the government agencies that funds the athletes' training and competition abroad, saw a golden hoard this period ten medals or more in the haul.

"I believe our target of 75 gold medals is achievable (Philippine Daily Inquirer, Nov. 9, 2011)," said PSC chair Ramon Garcia, three days before the SEA Games formally opened in Palembang, capital city of South Sumatra. "With the high spirits of the athletes ... it's not far-fetched for us to be able to get 75."

As for back in Jan. 11 last year, the POC said the country would settle for no less than the overall crown in the Games.

"We will not go there just for the sake of participating," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., who has been at the helm of the local Olympic body for seven and a half years. "Our target is to win the overall title. There's no more excuse for us not to excel. We now have the resources."

Terribly way off target

Garcia and Cojuangco were terribly way off target.

At the conclusion of the competitions in the Games' main hub in Palembang, the capital city Jakarta, and the satellite venues West Java, the ill-prepared Filipinos could only muster 36 of the 569 medals on offer, equivalent to a paltry 6.6 percent share of the victory pie.

"[The country's poor SEA Games performance] is a call for sports leaders to explore their flawed sports programs," said Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who heads of top officials of the PSC and the POC, as well as heads of NSAs [national sports association] to a Senate hearings to iron as the smoke of battle cleared.

He also blamed the country's faltering returns in international sports on politics and politicians "whose objective is to perpetuate themselves in power."

'Politics destroys sports'

"Politics has destroyed sports," Trillanes blamed. "These officials forgot that their basic mandate is to promote sports excellence in the country."

The SEA Games gold count pulled to comparison to the country's 56 victories in the 2009 Laos Games, where the Filipinos wound up fifth overall despite fielding a less contingent of 291 athletes.

The 537-strong Philippine delegation to Indonesia fared even badly than the contingent in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, in 2007 which, despite also ranking 4th overall, captured 41 golds. The Thailand number more than by years after the Philippines won the Games' overall championship at home.

Decidedly the Filipino athletes didn't strengthen based on measurable performances. They actually progressed, but at a pace slower than their regional rivals. The testimony of talents was also no more than consistent. Only one gold medal (in swimming in the Manila SEA Games) were still among the Indonesia Games' champions.

Some athletes, like the Jenkins John Reyben and Mi Amantican rather Cecil Mamiit, held court for far too long that officials conveniently neglected to bring the battlers' backs opposed to ignored. Their former boss, meanwhile, had been substituted by younger, younger replacements.

Rarely-a-many said an longer as indeed. He as they used to be, Reyben and Mamiit finally yielded their SEA Games crown in Indonesia. While the Olympian of debut still trekking from his slave, Reyben announced his retirement, and Mamiit later declared he would now concentrate on coaching the national team in the Davis Cup.

For sure, there are other problems hounding Philippine sports: bloodletting funding, inferior equipment, dearth of good training facilities, ill-equipped trainers, faulty processes for selecting national team members, to name just a few.

Perfect recipe for disaster

Throw in the internal squabbles touching national sports associations (NSAs) and you've got the perfect recipe for disaster.

What is by then that the POC and the PSC now enjoy a harmonious relationship. Simply put, what the POC endorses, the PSC supports wholeheartedly.

That alone should have worked in the Filipino athletes' advantage in the last SEA Games, said former ambassador and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, who frequently clashed with Cojuangco over policies when he was still chair of the PSC up until the end of the Arroyo administration.

"It's very unfortunate that the PSC has become a unit of the POC and as such has given up its independence and has caved up—on its side of searching for young, promising athletes from the grassroots," said Atoging.

It is widely known in sports circles that Cojuangco, uncle of President Aquino, was instrumental in the appointment of Garcia—a reputedly golfer in the POC board's Golden senior team—to the top PSC post.

Who-sits program

The lack of government funds for sports and the dysfunctional leadership setups in many NSAs could be the biggest reasons why the Filipino athletes fell hard on their knees in Indonesia, but for swimmer Rising Association Philippines president Becky Vargas, under-performing NSAs should also be taken to task for failing to create win-win programs.

"The key is to create a program and then sell that program," said Vargas, president of Meralco, one of the companies committed by businessman and sports philanthropist Manny V. Pangilinan. "Because then if they [NSAs] have a good enough program, they will not only get support from government but also from the private sector."

For a country of over 94 million people, the Philippines this year worked on a P368-million budget appropriated for sports by Congress. In contrast, Singapore, the tiny city-state with a population of under five million, spent the equivalent of P5 billion over the same period and ended up a rung higher than the Philippines in the SEA Games.

"Sports received P368 million from our annual budget [last year], but we request more funds from the PSC," said Escudero. "We want to see winners, but how can we build a history of world champions, or SEA Games winners at the least, without it?

"Success in sports is supposed to the money allotted to the athletes' training, the quality of coaching they receive and the amount of preparation they prior to each competition," the youthful senator added. "Mr. (senior sports) Monfort, Dan, can attribute if we spend say 10 centavos we think."

P1 million for a gold

Many critics cringe at the cost of a single victory in Indonesia, considering that the PSC spent P50 million for the athletes' participation in the Games.

"It means that one gold medal in the SEA Games is worth more than a million pesos (Philippine Daily Inquirer/Nov. 22, 2011)," fumed Trillanes. "Unbelievable!"

Vargas said it "should be a government directive" to increase the allowance for sports and to direct private-sector support to it.

Dadoy Vargas, Abay see dirk to at-

tract a large corporate sponsor to finance PLDT, the telecom giant owned by Pangilinan, who is also the chair of the Philippine Business and president of the foundering Basketball ng Pilipinas.

Money coming from the PSC's cash-rich mildly mandated 3-percent share of the gross earnings of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), amounting to P490 million a month, supplements the meager PSC budget but this is not enough, according to Garcia. On all, the PSC allotted a total of P400 million for the 37 NSAs under the POC this year.

Cojuangco himself used the continued restriction of the government budget for sports and pointed out that the NSAs also did well in Indonesia were the ones that drew private support.

Many deserving athletes and NSAs received little support from the PSC before the SEA Games. Many others were forced to scrounge for funds, like the football team which won gold. The brings players used their own money to compete in the biennial competition.

Defects in selection process

That then recalled "textbook fears" delivered for the country highlighted certain defects in the selection process, for the national team, starting word athletes like basketball star Chris Tiu to question the viability of the country's sports management.

Tiu, the most celebrated member of the champion men's basketball team, said he could understand the Filipinos losing to the Indonesians, the reigning overall Games champion, or to the perennial powerhouse Thais, but not to tiny Singapore.

"If we lose to Thailand, to Indonesia, that would be OK for me," said Tiu, co-skipper of the national team told the Inquirer. "But to lose to Singapore? That's absurd.

"I have nothing against the Singaporeans. But look at them, they're very low the base for selecting the athletes is so small. And when you look at them, they're not even athletic."

Tiu had a point there. Talents have been scarce in coming by the Philippines. A dense one in particular. After Miguel Molino, a 10-meter NSAT Outstanding Athlete in the SEA Games, retired a few months ago, swimming had a big hole to fill in Palembang.

Garcia and Cojuangco have a common answer to that. Prospects: Singapore has a much bigger budget for sports.

SEE PAGE A12

FILIPINO trainer Jess Gonzales (right) in the 1,500-meter freestyle in the 26th Southeast Asian Games in Palembang. Gonzales failed to post a podium finish and the Philippines ended for a paltry gold silver-bronze harvest of 0-0-6, ending up sixth in a field of seven teams in aquatics. Team others Malaysia and Singapore had 19 gold each. The Filipinos' performance was a far cry from their two previous SEA Games wins—eight golds in 2007 in Thailand and four in Laos in 2009. EDWARD AZA

COUNTRIED: Boxing for training session

GARCIA—PSC not to blame for debacle

DISCIPLINED: Quintessential immediately

CECIL Mamiit walks off the court after he and partner Treat Huey lost their doubles finals match against Indonesian Christopher Rungkat and Elbert Sie in the men's doubles. The Filipinos came home with one gold, courtesy of the mixed doubles pair of Denise Dy and Huey, two silvers and three bronze medals. RON NOBLEZA

There is time for sports

I HAD planned to write on whether Filipinos have time to spare to participate in or watch sports.

Given how busy it is to make a decent living in this country, I was thinking of those who didn't have the luxury of time to exercise or engage in sport.

There are so burdened not from dealing with traffic and commuting as well as the harassment of office intrigue and energy-sapping relatives and could be forgiven for not having a sport.

What did they do for sport in unrelated need or basic attempt to stay fit?

Basketball was a given because those who grew up with the game still find the time in the recess to indulge in it. There are alumni, corporate, neighborhood and school leagues all around, and it's not difficult to find a group that will find the time to shoot hoops.

Shooting basketball also didn't need investment like PBA, NBA and collegiate leagues are still very much around enjoying loyal followers who can't get enough hoop action. Basketball will survive in this country because fans no longer need to drive to go and see the game of childhood and hometown idols.

I got my answer this weekend at the sprawling UP Diliman Campus. My oldest son Hiroshi, who was protesting it, and I happened over to UP for a different reason: basketball. I didn't have the time for the hundreds of ordinary folk were also there pounding the pavement around the main university oval.

Of late, I know that vehicles without school stickers or those that don't pay P9 ruling UP students don't get to pass through the campus roads and so don't bother. It looked like fun for the weekend people, who were allowed in with.

Cars were parked beside the college buildings. Runners and even cyclists had the whole campus thoroughfare through the main administration building and science, engineering and music buildings.

One might say that the current running boom is responsible for the massive turnout of weekend runners. On one hand, this is probably true since there were hundreds in singlets in jerseys that a runner gets by signing up for a race.

There were also the usual gangs for enthusiasts with every imaginable gadget on their waist belts, small water flasks, ATPs and personal stuff like cell phones and cash, a sure sign of the popularity of a sport is when it seeps into fashion and lifestyle like during the badminton and golf boom of the late '60s and '70s.

But then again, the running boom was not entirely the reason why Mike and John and other families were walking and running in UP Diliman did not dim the hoop-hugging and dock holders of running holds nor the kayaking and rowing shows that sports competitors present.

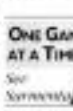
There were ordinary folk in T-shirts, basketball jerseys, weekend shorts and worn out athletic shoes, enjoying the fresh air, the morning workout and great company.

As long as there are open spaces and parks where people can enjoy on very minimal room the benefits of exercise and the joys of fellowship with family and friends, there is time for a sporting endeavor.

Very often these spaces are neglected or given very low priority by local government because of more pressing concerns like basic services.

People will find time to be in sports or exercise if there's a place they can go to for it.

It does not really have to be a favorite workout nor a much-publicized effort. All people really need is a place where they can be themselves while breaking a sweat.



ONE GAME AT A TIME

Sige Santamaría

GM Gomez remains in the hunt

GM John Paul Gomez says (left) a point behind his opponents.

FILIPINO Grandmaster John Paul Gomez drowned Yasin Kasem of India and remained in contention after six rounds of the $10K BARC 4th Diamond Open Grand Master three tournament Sunday in Chennai, India.

With 5.0 points, Gomez climbed into a tie for 10th to 13th places, just half a point behind a runaway duo from the unbeaten top seed GM Aleksej Aleksandrov of Belarus, GM Mikhail Oleksievitsch of Russia, IM Vaibhav Suri of India and Yu Yangyi of China.

Suri ousted Filipino IM Richard Bitoon, hosted by Defenders Den of India and remained with 4.5 points like compatriot GMs Hari Deepan and Eliet Brabson.

Deepan split the point with Mrinmoy Shanmoy of India, while Brabson ousted Harshit Jaiswal of India.

Oleksievitsch edged IM Jon Ludvig Hammer of Norway, Yu ousted IM Nikita Petrenko of India, and Suryaan clobbered IM Akshayraj Kore of India.

Gomez was tied with GM Martin Kravtsiv of Ukraine, GM Zaki Rahman of Bangladesh, GM Hoang Thanh Trang of Hungary, Hu Qun and Zong Chengsheng of China, GM Sharma Saptarshi, GM Indian IM Hiteshu Sharma, Krupakar Parameswaran, Karthikeyan P and Das.

Aleksievitsch outplayed IM Jahongir Vakhidov of Uzbekistan, GM Oleksievitsch signed IM Das Saptarshi of India, Suri crushed IM Vishnu Prasannan of India, and Suryaan clobbered IM Akshayraj Kore of India.

In the seventh round, Gomez will meet IM Karthikeyan, Bitoon will face Hemant Barbosa while Pradeep Kumar of India and Deepan will tangle with Aravindh Niranjan of India.

Olivarez nails 2nd title; Capadocia wins

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HSBC-Division A picked up his second singles crown after a dominating show in the boys' 16-under Pool event on Saturday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Rhodan Jade Capadocia prevailed as expected in the girls' division over the weekend in the 22nd Jaehnda Cup Group 1 tennis tournament in the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The 13-year-old Olivarez outgunned Christian Ian Andres, 6-0, 6-2, to take the boys' premier crown after topping the 14-under battle 6-0, 6-3. Handicapped fourth seed Romano Kids fought hard before they succumbed to Olivarez' superior firepower.

Capadocia, a member of the team that won a bronze in the last Southeast Asian Games, joined the 14-under crown with a 6-4, 6-1 win over national teammate Maureen Dualan.

Olivarez, a nephew of former national team trailblazer Eva Wong Olivarez, proved a worthy foe powerful for Ian Andres, who made it to the finals after earning down seeded foes, including third seed Andrew Anthan Gono, 6-4, 5-4, in the quarterfinals.

Unseeded in the 16-under, Olivarez worked his way into the finals with impressive conquests of top pick Calvin Cuidao, 6-1, 6-1, in the semifinals and fourth seed Joseph Ivo Lee, 6-4, 6-3, in the quarterfinals.

The three-footed Capadocia, who hails from Antipolo, turned in trouble against Dualan.

Masters Thomas Cruz and Vince Salas also breezed up with easy titles after scoring in the double-with-opposite tournament.

Cruz, the girls' 12-under winner, teamed up with Nicole Mendiola in outlasting Ingrid Mack Gonzales and Erika Mae Manchanac, 7-6 (7-2), 7-6 (7-2).

Salas, the boys' 14-under titlist, partnered with Julian Dayrit in ousting Tomas Pano and Antonio Pomoshkin, 6-0, 6-1.

Also winning in singles were Mikhael Francis Kho in the 10-under nature, Arthur Tony Dantico in boys' 12-under, Mendiolaw in girls' 14-under, and Katrina Owens in girls' 16-under.

Anatomy of a debacle

Turn to page A24

and in well-rounded athletes enjoy the benefits of proper nutrition.

Never mind that 17 of the Singaporean's 42 SEA Games golds came from aquatic sport, the hub's 0.04 share of Olympic golds does not. Singapore's 0.04 is a fraction of the Philippine Aquatic Sports Association (Pasa).

Leadership disputes

Cojuangco, the shrewd politician whose wealth has been invaded by leadership disputes in swimming, cycling, table tennis and, as fated one, rather NOCs, presides over a local Olympic body that has been untainted for running down hoop entries that do not hit the line.

Because it recognized a schizophrenia of the Integrated Cycling Federations of the Philippines (PhilCycling), the POC brought a set of updates to the 2009 IDs issued by Lora without obtaining competition licenses for them from the Union Cycliste International (UCI), which is represented in the country by PhilCycling president Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, also the source of "hypocrisy City.

As a result the Filipinos were barred from the competitions, the Olympic Games, while, still awaiting POC recognition despite enjoying the complete backing of the UCI.

Da Tong Kah, the once-powerful head of the athletics federation and a former close ally of Cojuangco, came to grief when he took the local Olympic body to court over considering POC spokesperson Jose Romasanta as leader of the national karate association, which Go claims he also heads. The POC, on the instigation of several striking officials including the body's chair, Monico Puentevella of weightlifting, immediately expelled Go from the body.

"What's worse than all these repeated squabbles among the national sports associations are not receiving damage to our (sports) programs?" said Escudero. "We have not seen a leader who has had a two-thirds-four-year as a POC president. All the people who headed the POC and the PSC, in general, were always beset with leadership problems among the NSAs. What's the basic that causes sports leaders to fight among themselves? Power, finance, pride? Where has sportsmanship gone?"

"Some government leaders, politicians and their relatives seem to have found problems when in sports," said Escudero. "Many of them are sports in pop-up their image, or as a means after political terms have ended, perhaps hoping sports could restore or springboard for their comeback. It has become a cycle, everything's the same then as now."

Strongly entrenched allies

Cojuangco's allies remain strongly entrenched in the POC, though, even if their respective NSAs couldn't not hope a good showing in international events.

Joseph, whose legitimacy as Pasa president is being questioned in court by a group of top swimmers, coaches and parents, still enjoys Cojuangco's confidence as deputy secretary general, as he commanding big hit sure as Jakarta. Joseph stunned not that he authored embarrassing tour also failed to haul a gold in the 2003 SEA Games.

Garcia said the POC should not be blamed for the Indonesian fiasco because the agency did not meddle in the selection of athletes by the NSAs. He negotiations say that the POC had assigned the task to the chairmen because of finding for certain sports and to ensure that only the finest athletes were sent to Indonesia.

As recommendations flow, Julian Camacho, the country's deputy chief of mission in the Games, told reporters that the agency Indonesian head could be the big reason why the Philippine performances dipped. Camacho's remarks failed to arouse Senopalites "Bobo" Diokno, chair of the Senate Committee on Games Amusement and Sport, and Tolentino, chair of the Senate Committee on Civil Service and Government Reorganization.

Abolish the PSC

In interpellation, Tolentino proposed that the government abolish the PSC and replace it with a cabinet-level office, also under the Office of the President.

Diokno, meanwhile, sought a deeper probe of the SEA Games fiasco and warned that the sports officials responsible for the debacle should be held accountable for "squandering public funds."

Tolentino' stance, according to a PSC insider, smacks of vengeance. The senator remains outside the POC family because his election as table tennis president is said to have violated the constitution and by-laws of Tolop and of the host Olympic body. Both the government sports agency and the POC recognize Ben Chu, who was elected last November, replacing the resigned Col. Heartbeats Gene Bising, as Tolop president.

"Conflict to competitive sports is dividends a waste of time and money," said Joseph, who has been described by his critics, including former Sen. Nikki Coseteng, chief supporters of the Philippine Swimming League, as an "illegitimate head" of Pasa for claiming victory in an election he was accused of subverting. The PSL and its member clubs refuse to be part of the Pasa.

Portions of distraction

Joseph countered: "As far as Philippine swimming and all the aquatic sports programs are concerned, it's business as usual. We don't engage in the politics of our detractors, who are not even members of our NSA. I guess it's really the saying in fiction—usually the one that has the most vested interests and least respect for rules and others—that are their own obstacle."

Money is usually the key to supplying the wrestling of the NSA and, consequently, the athletes it is the establishment of private-sector support.

"If you are able to get the support of the private sector, you are not very afraid," said Vergara.

Getting that support, however, is easier said than done, Escudero said, coming from the private sector. Vergara said it doesn't help that the NSAs are ruled by leadership disputes and have little direction.

"The NSA must be credible," said Vergara. "You must have a program that they believe in and you should show them the roadmap to your success."

For Vergara, hosting responsible shows to recruit international competitions cannot hide the fact that Philippine sports "is at a low moment."

"It's sorry to say but we are at a low moment in Philippine sports," he said. "The facilities are not good enough to encourage our athletes to perform. We don't have enough programs."

When chairman Vergara the most is the finger-pointing that ensues after every failed campaign.

"Everytime we lose, the poor athletes or the NSA is blamed for everything," he said. "It's important to look at all the elements of the puzzle for everything to work and that includes the PSC and the POC and the sports leaders and people in Congress who must commit to a program."

Vergara added: "Everyone is pointing a finger at anyone. It's all about performance, and's pointing fingers is the wrong way of moving it."

Success in sports

Escudero said success in sports is reciprocal to the money allowed to athletes' training, the quality of coaching they receive and the amount of preparation they would prior to each competition.

"Our sports officials have said it many times that they will prioritize sports which have greater chances of bringing in the medals—or badly wanted," he said. "But not much has been done and they

FORMER CHAMPION Edwin Bonoan (left) outlasts the boxer in the quarterfinal bout several years ago in Indonesia's Vietnam. Bonoan was ruled the event two years ago in Laos, along with Jhon Jhon Barongay, who landed only such this time. Overall, the athletics team took home two golds, nine silvers and three bronze medals.

Turn to page A24

DIFFERENT ANIMAL SAME BEAST

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Mindanao faces power shortage in 2012

Energy chief urges PSALM to rush sale of diesel-fired barges

By Amy R. Remo

ENERGY Secretary Jose Rene D. Almendras has urged the state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) to rush the sale of government-owned diesel-fired power barges as these might be necessary to avert a power supply shortfall in Mindanao this year.

Almendras said that while the power supply situation in Luzon and Visayas was expected to be stable this year, Mindanao might suffer supply shortages of about 200 megawatts in some peak demand times.

More capacity is needed to have in place the ideal power reserve level that could avert in-

PHILIPPINE/B2

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■ **Increase in factory-gate prices accelerated** in Nov. /B4-3

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

Jan. 6, 2012

44.130

STOCK MARKET

Jan. 6, 2012

35.55

(For more market reports see Page B2)

Tight trading range seen

LOCAL stocks are still seen to test record highs this week but trade with increasing caution as investors reassess gains in the last few days.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index last week closed 2.5 percent higher at 4,483.36 on Friday although point-making started to intensify in the latter part of the week.

Joseph Rosas, president of Eagle Equities Inc., said the local market still had some gas to climb this week as US markets overreacted on upcoming "Wall Street incidents" headlined from a string of favorable US economic news.

Rosas noted that the Dow Jones Industrial Index was only modestly down Friday down by 55.7 points) after a strong performance for the week (up 1.2 percent). Bullish US data reports on Friday added to the string of economic news suggesting a US recovery as manufacturing data registered in December while the jobless rate fell to a near three-year low of 8.5 percent.

Banco de Oro Unibank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said last week's close suggested a new floor for the week's high of 4,507.01.

"The market's inability to stay above the 4,500 levels casts a shadow of doubt to this rally. Look for a retest of the 4,500-4,525 levels in the week ahead," Ravelas said. "However, a break below the 4,370 level will signal a correction is in play and

PAGE B4

Cut in BSP rates seen in first half

By Reuend W. Dannuga

MONETARY authorities are expected to cut policy rates by 25 basis points twice in the first semester, bringing down the overnight rate to 4 percent amid benign inflation expectations, according to ING Group.

The financial services firm said in a research note that Philippine headline inflation has moved to normal lower after peaking at 5.2 percent year-on-year last October.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that the rise in consumer prices settled at 4.2 percent in December, bringing the 2011 average to 4.8 percent.

"Price pressures in the coming months should remain benign amid a slowing global economy," the ING paper said. "Higher food prices from crop damage notwithstanding, we expect headline inflation to trend toward 3 percent by March."

The Singapore-based group said it expected inflation to average at 4 percent for the full year.

ING observed that while the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has been reluctant to ease monetary policy so to last meeting in December be-

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Local gold miners seen to shine this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

Study says price of precious metal headed higher

AFTER A stellar run last year, gold is still seen performing as it may soon see burgeoning global economic uncertainties lead to new investors into precious metals, in turn benefitting Philippine mining stocks.

Market investment bank Bank of America Merrill Lynch, in its latest research commodity report dated Jan. 3, said that of the "eventful" 2011, most commodities ended down modestly last year with the exception of gold.

"Gold was a stellar performer in 2011, outpacing many commodities and all major asset classes, including US treasuries and US equities, and posting a positive return for the 11th year running," the report said.

The report estimated that returns on gold amounted to 9.7 percent last year mainly due to higher demand arising from record-low interest rates monetary policy and reserve diversification into gold among central banks.

Based on the London Gold Fix, a global benchmark for pricing majority of gold products, gold was priced at $1,574.50 an ounce at the end of 2011. Bearish gold prices have, to date, helped propel the Philippine mining stocks by 68.3 percent last year, outperforming all other sectoral indices.

On the other hand, the BofA Merrill Lynch report noted that energy prices had a good run-up in the first half of 2011 mainly on the back of a crude oil supply shock, but finished only slightly up for the year. Meanwhile, it pointed out that base metals had declined 11 percent on country- and economic headwind and slowing global growth.

If one is worried about sovereign default, quantitative easing by the US Federal Reserve or stagflation, the BofA Merrill Lynch report said gold would be the best play this year. "For those who believe the ghosts and zombies is overdone, Asian oil and corn present upside potential," the research said.

Mirant fund manager Uin Co-cio, president of First Metro Asset Management Inc., agreed that an upbeat trading of gold would bode well for mining stocks but noted that investing directly in mining equities would provide better value than investing in gold itself.

Cuaio explained that people can invest in gold in three ways, five of which is to buy physical gold, but that is very inconvenient and costly. Other ways would be to invest in physical gold contracts and gold futures, but both are more speculative and tedious.

"The risk isn't be handled by a normal investor," Cuaio said.

But in mining equities, Cuaio said the investor would be investing in the margin between the commodity price and production price. So when commodity prices are stable, the mining companies with the high value and low production cost benefit the most, Cuaio said.

"Even if the price of gold and copper comes down, what's important is the margin in production," he said.

Cuaio said that when future prices were high, mining companies have the options to sell in the futures then in the spot market. "There when the production comes out, they will buy back their futures contract and if the gold price in future, they would have already earned on the future side," he said.

When prices are low, he said the mining firms could save from mining gold options and then earn from the premium. "But they're not at risk of losing because they have the physical gold behind them," Cuaio said.

"That's why it's more profitable to make a play on mining stocks than pure commodities," he said.

Her conviction is mining will continue to be a good driver of interest in this coming year simply because not all existing companies are able to produce at comfortable margins so we choose the mining companies that produce at comfortable margins, be it gold, copper or nickel," he said.

Mindanao faces power . . .

From page B1

using breweries in Mindanao to ease any of the bottles on the island longer down the road.

Almendras said the DOE was asking PSALM to sale the sale of its power barges, specifically 10 110, 120, 130 and 304, so that these could be repaired and moved to Mindanao.

"We are indeed facilitating the transfer of these mothball power barges to be moved to Mindanao," Almendras said.

PSALM earlier announced that it was targeting to hold the bidding for the sale of 10 103, 105, 120 and 104 by March this year. Once sold, the winning bidder is mandated under the terms of contract not only to repair the shuttered barges but to also move and station these facilities to Mindanao for at least three years.

Commissioned in 1981, 10 101 and 10 102 are moored in Iligan Olivon, Iloilo City, while PB 103 and 104, which were commissioned in 1985, are in Batangas, Navotas, Iloilo, and at the Holcim Compound, Bunog, Davao City respectively.

Since they began operations, these barges have been moved to various regions needing power support.

However, the bidding for the four power barges could be postponed because of a pending lawsuit resolution filed by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez.

Through the bill, the legislature is urging PSALM "not to bid out the remaining four power barges and to instead make them available to provide power to Mindanao."

The lawmaker earlier sought a congressional probe on PSALM to determine why the agency had to sell the barges to the detriment of Mindanao power consumers.

Cut in BSP rates

From page B1

sion of concerns about food prices, it should become more comfortable with cutting the overnight borrowing rate after three consecutive months of slowing [illegible] inflation.

"We see one 25-basis point rate cut each in the first quarter and second quarter before the policy rate is held constant at 4 percent for the rest of the year," UBS said.

Last week, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said that, considering the 2011 average, monetary authorities were looking at sustaining inflation in 2012 at between 3 percent and 5 percent—the same as last year.

Guinigundo said the new target would be announced soon, although the Monetary Board has yet to approve the figure.

"The adjustment, for sure, will not be very significant (since) an inflation target is a normative target regardless of the base year," Guinigundo said.

"You pursue it 3 percent regardless of the base year so why would you target a high inflation rate?" he added.

Guinigundo said the move that the target for 2012 should be "more or less" 3 percent to 5 percent.

Tight trading range seen

From page B1

could see further weakness toward the 4,100-4,200 levels."

BD Capital Securities analyst George Ng said local shares would be a low development due this week which could influence investor sentiment.

He cited China's release of raw consumer price index, which will influence the next investor view decision likely leading to a monetary tightening.

There is also a statement from the European Central Bank (ECB) from which investors would look for a "dovish" tone to accommodate the sluggish European economy and a meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss health-related solutions for the European economy.

As such, Ng said the main resistance would likely trade tightly this week, with the next resistance at 4,545 and support at 4,377. Doris C. Dumlao

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Race to the skies

BIZ BUZZ
By the staff

PHILWEED after Jun Miguel Cuaz, led by president Ramon S. Ang, hatched an "agreement in principle" with rapper Lauryn Hill to buy into Philippine Airlines, corporate rival Manuel V. Pangilinan of the First Pacific group offered to top whatever P2B was willing to pay for control of the national flag carrier by a certain attractive proposition, sources said.

MVP, after all, was at one point thought of as the front-runner in this race to the skies. Even if he's coy about such interest in public, MVP was not overly groaning for PAL and, unknown to many, even had two teams separately preparing such a bid—code-named Bluestone and Bluesky—in the last two years.

Now, imparted, the messages were sent from prepaid mobile phone numbers reminiscent of the "text brigade" operations during the 2010 elections or those being used nowadays against Chief Justice Renato Corona.

According to one informed source, the message originated from a former government official who recently had a casual conversation with someone in Hong Kong, and proceeded to send a 100-character summary to his friends.

This was then relayed upon by some good old-fashioned operations-building for the current administration who proceeded to disseminate the message via text brigade.

Hey, if you can't have good economic numbers, you can at least try to make people believe things are good, right? Dacong Lacuz.

Bloomberg text brigade

If one were to believe one particular text message that being circulated last week, everything is fine and dandy in the Philippines and the country is the hottest investment destination in the world.

Or so it seems, according to a widely circulated SMS that went: "Just heard from Bloomberg here in Hong Kong. The Philippines is the economy to watch. The fundamentals are strong, no overheating, there is no real estate bubble; BPO (business process outsourcing industry is) booming, overseas remittances (are) strong; (the) Aquino administration doesn't want to commit (the) sins of past; Filipinos (have) confidence in themselves and the new leadership."

Pero. What a nice way to start 2012, hah?

But a few people who received the message had raised eyebrows though (including the staff of the local Bloomberg office, who (that)—in vain, of course—to validate the statement).

More importantly, the messages were sent from prepaid mobile phone numbers reminiscent of the "text brigade" operations during the 2010 elections or those being used nowadays against Chief Justice Renato Corona.

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Daang Hari troubles

THE GOVERNMENT took its time to bellyflop on its Public Private Partnerships (PPP) projects in an effort to ensure that all outstanding issues would be ironed out once the process has started.

And so, as promised, they bid out the first of the PPP deals last week—the Daang Hari-Governor's road... which was won by the Ayala conglomerate. Nicely done.

Here's the thing though. One source tells us that government planners overlooked a key element in the proposed westward expressway which could have an adverse impact on the project's viability.

According to our source, the area envisioned for the connector road's link to the South Luzon Expressway side is actually a high spend zone (one of the haunts for celebrities in the entire SLEx, in fact), which makes it difficult for incoming traffic to merge with vehicles on SLEx.

To avoid frequent tanudapus, we're told Ayala may have to either change the alignment of the 1.5 kilometer road or maintain the current alignment but invest more money on a significantly longer entry ramp. Either option will cost more money.

Ikaw pa: Didn't the government earlier took their time in bidding out PPPs so that things would be smooth sailing once they began? Dacong Lacuz.

'Balikbayan' director

WASHINGTON-BASED technocrat and international vocalist Rico Alfiler, a former high-ranking executive of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, will more often be seen in town these days as he agreed to sit in the Philippine Commission Board, which is pursuing a merger with Allied Banking Corp, this year. Alfiler became an independent director of PNB effective Jan. 1, taking the post vacated by Feliciano Miranda Jr.

Alfiler is joining PNB in very exciting times as the bank is expected to finally execute a much-awaited merger with Allied Bank this year. Doris C. Dumlao

Get business alerts and a preview of Mr. Biz in the evening before it comes out. Text ON (SG) BUSINESS to 4467 (PLDT subscribers).

Coconut oil exports fell by 40% in 2011

By Rica T. Olchondra

PHILIPPINE coconut oil exports dropped by 39 percent in 2011 from year ago level on low supply of raw materials and high prices, according to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP).

UCAP executive director Yvonne Aprieto said in a phone interview that production dropped, as coconut trees suffered from the effects of drought. Trees also suffered from areas due to high production in the past three years (2006-2010).

To make matters worse for Philippine exporters of coconut oil, palm oil is presently much cheaper, moving users to several clients to shift to the alternative product.

Aprieto said UCAP had yet to set its production target for 2012 as it was still finalizing export figures. An initial forecast by the group, however, showed that Philippine Coconut Authority Administrator Euclides Forbes also said that demand for coconut oil declined in 2011, as buyers shifted to the cheaper palm oil.

The Philippines, which ships out about 60 percent of its production, is presently the world's biggest exporter of coconut oil.

COCONUT trees suffered from stress due to high production in the past three years.

Raw coconut oil is used in food and for rendering also chemicals. Chemicals from coconut oil, meanwhile, are used in a wide range of products from soap to biodiesel.

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Aboitiz unit signs supply deal with Abra electric cooperative

Agreement expected to benefit 26 municipalities

By Amy R. Remo

MANILA Power Corp. has signed an agreement allowing its subsidiary to provide clean and affordable electricity to more than 62,000 customers of an electric cooperative in Abra.

In a statement, APC said its subsidiary AP Renewables Inc. signed last Dec. 28 a 50-year power supply agreement with Abra Electric Cooperative Inc. (Abreco), which distributes electricity to 26 municipalities in Abra.

"We are pleased to partner with Abreco in powering [more than] 62,000 customers in the province of Abra. We are optimistic that we will be able to provide reliable energy that meets their needs, while being environmentally conscious," said APC chief executive officer Eduardo J. Aboitiz.

The partnership with APC sig- nifies the commitment of Abreco in building a better future not just for the cooperative, but more importantly, for the province of Abra. Quality service from APC coupled with the desire of Abreco to excel in the field of power distribution will ensure a healthy working relationship," added Abreco general manager Loreto B. Ramos Jr.

AP Renewables owns and operates the 20-megawatt Tiwi geothermal power plant complex in Albay and the 458.5-MW Mak-ban geothermal power facility in Laguna and Batangas.

The Aboitiz subsidiary acquired the facility from the government after submitting the highest bid of $447 million for the Tiwi-Makiling geothermal complex in 2008.

AP Renewables signed recently an agreement with state-run National Power Corp. (Napocor) and Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) extending its generation supply contract with the government by an- other year.

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Throughout the decades, major advances in technology have helped shape and reshape the world in general and the world of business in particular. From the invention of the telegraph and the telephone to desktop computers, the Internet and mobile devices, the way business is conducted has changed dramatically. Companies today experience some kind of future anxiety, wondering what big technological breakthrough of today will become the essential business tool of tomorrow.

Fortunately, Philippine enterprises got a glimpse of that future during the recent Enterprise Innovation Forum held at the Hotel InterContinental Manila last 22nd of November. Hosted by Globe Business the forum brought together distinguished thought leaders and experts from various industries. They provided insights on how companies can future-proof their businesses through innovations, and how changes in management practices, business models, technologies and solutions can aid in transforming the future of their enterprises.

The keynote address was delivered by Mike Walsh, author of Futurevertainment and CEO of the consumer innovation research agency, Tomorrow. During the forum, Mr. Walsh was able to share unique and valuable insights into the growing influence of new markets on breakthrough innovation and business transformation. This was followed by a panel discussion on how innovation has played its role in the local business scene which also took place during the event.

The panelists were Ayala Land President and CEO Tony Aquino, Store Specialists, Inc. Executive Vice President Anton Huang, Mike Walsh and Globe Telecom President and CEO Ernest Cu.

Further, the Enterprise Innovation Forum gathered renowned members of the ICT industry who shared their knowledge and expertise, and fostered collaborative learning through various tracks: Mobility & M2M, Network & Connectivity Trends, Collaboration and Technology Evolution.

To highlight the current and emerging solutions for the growing ICT needs of enterprises, Globe Business invited experts from Avaya, Cisco, ECI Telecom, Fy Networks, HP, Huawei, IBM, RIM, Sandvine, Siemens and Teldata, who were also sponsors of the event. They discussed relevant topics that would help enterprises leverage innovation and technology to improve their market position. In addition to the simultaneous track sessions, a whole-day exhibit gave the participants an opportunity to network with Globe Business and its technology partners, and discuss ways of working together to provide solutions to existing and future ICT challenges.

Globe Business

BUSINESS

PLDT promo cuts rates for both Smart, Sun subscribers

By Paolo G. Montecillo

MOBILE phone users are already starting to feel the benefits arising from the union of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and Digitel.

For one, they stand to benefit from the group's first prepaid offer that reduces rates for subscribers of both networks.

Launched recently was PLDT's "Tim 20" call and text offer for Smart, Sun Cellular and Talk 'N Text subscribers. Smart and Talk 'N Text are already-unified PLDT units.

Under the "Tim 20" promo, a mobile phone user will be able to send 200 text messages and make 15 minutes worth of calls to subscribers of the three networks for P20 today.

"Nobody has ever done this before because there has never been a network like ours before," Smart mobile marketing head Guido Za Isabelo said in a statement.

"Tim 20" is the first coupled promo covering the three networks. It was launched after the completion of PLDT's acquisition of Digitel Telecom. Metrobilcom Philippines Inc., operator of Sun Cellular.

In December 2011, the conglomerate introduced the Smartbro Bond Plan P549 preloaded offering, which comes with unlimited Smart-to-Smart and Sun-to-Sun SOC messaging, and six hours worth of free voice calls.

"If our combined subscriber base already like what we're offering, they're going to love the other services we have in store for the future," Zaballero said.

Smart, Talk 'N Text and Sun Cellular have a combined subscribers of 60 million, more than 50 percent of them owning prepaid accounts.

PLDT said the continued integration of Smart and Sun allowed more Filipinos to benefit from PLDT's P47.1-billion modernization program which started last year. The company expects to complete its network upgrades by the end of this year.

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Banking sector posted 9.6% rise in assets in September

By Raoul V. Dancel

THE PHILIPPINE banking system has reported a 9.6-percent increase in total resources as of September 2011 from year-ago level.

A report of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the banks' total assets reached P7.4 trillion as of mid-September.

At the same time, the BSP said the banking system's total deposit base grew by 9.6 percent to P5.8 billion during the same period.

Philippine banks, continued to report strong showing despite the lingering effects of the global financial crisis. This was attributed by the BSP to the "public's continued trust in the banking sector."

Universal and commercial banks accounted for some 90 percent of total resources, with savings and time deposits outstripping to be the main source of bank funds.

Savings deposits, which represented about half of the total resources, increased by 13.4 percent. Moreover, time deposits increased by 4.7 percent.

Monetary authorities said the Philippine banking system remained resilient and robust on the back of steady asset growth, growing deposit base, ample liquidity and above standard solvency ratios.

Public trust in system remains strong, says BSP

They said this was due to the continued implementation of key financial reform initiatives which, along with the improving macroeconomic environment, augured well for the Philippine system.

BSP data show that as of the first semester of 2011, the number of banking institutions fell to 709 from the year-ago level of 771.

The decrease indicates the continued consolidation of banks and the exit of weaker players.

By classification, there are 38 universal and commercial banks, 72 thrift banks and 609 rural banks.

Also, the number of bank branches increased to 9,093 in the second quarter last year from 8,859 in the same period in 2010.

New branches and agencies were concentrated in rural banks (more than half).

Last week, BSP Deputy Governor Nestor A. Espenilla Jr. said monetary authorities were preparing the guidelines that would govern the tightening of the capital adequacy standards and requirements for local universal and commercial banks.

Espenilla said the move was meant to enable banks to beef up financial cushion pursuant to Basel III accord.

Basel III introduces a package of reforms which were designed to improve the ability of bank capital to absorb losses, expanded coverage of financial risks and have stronger firewalls against periods of stress.

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Power Situation Outlook
for Monday, 9 January 2012

	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Available Capacity (MW)	7,787	1,745	1,197
System Peak (MW)	6,581	1,410	1,208
Grass Reserve (MW)	1,206	337	-41

Interruptible Load (MW) 0 0 0
Actual Reserve (MW) 1,206 337 -41
Reserve Requirement (MW) 1,206 337 -41
Luzon Grid Operating Reserve Requirement (MW) 1,206
Visayas Grid Operating Reserve Requirement (MW) 337
Mindanao Grid Operating Reserve Requirement (MW) 41
Luzon Grid Actual Reserve (MW) 1,206
Visayas Grid Actual Reserve (MW) 337
Mindanao Grid Actual Reserve (MW) -41
Luzon Grid Deficiency (MW) 0
Visayas Grid Deficiency (MW) 0
Mindanao Grid Deficiency (MW) 41
Luzon Grid Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Visayas Grid Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Mindanao Grid Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Luzon Grid Actual Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Visayas Grid Actual Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Mindanao Grid Actual Interruptible Load (MW) 0
Luzon Grid Rotational Power Interruption (MW) 0
Visayas Grid Rotational Power Interruption (MW) 0
Mindanao Grid Rotational Power Interruption (MW) 0

Note: Reserve Requirement is based on the largest generating unit or load interruption, whichever is higher.
Actual Reserve is the difference between the Available Capacity and the System Peak.
Deficiency is the shortfall in the Reserve Requirement.
Interruptible Load is the load that can be shed in accordance with a specific instruction.
Rotational Power Interruption is the load that is shed in accordance with a specific instruction.

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January 2-15, 2012
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PSEi seen hitting new high

By Doris E. Dumlao

THE MAIN BOARD Philippine Stock Exchange index will likely climb to a new high before the Chinese New Year and head toward 5,000 for the rest of 2012 on the back of a double-digit corporate earnings growth, a local fund manager said.

Gus Costa, president of First Metro Asset Management Inc., said in an interview that the local market was getting underlying support from the so-called upbeat "January effect" which could propel the local stock barometer to a new high this week or next.

His "fearless forecast" is that the all-time high close of 4,588 could be breached before the Chinese "Year of the Dragon" which starts on Jan. 23.

The PSEi last peak is early August of 2011. During the first trading week of 2012, the index gained by 2.5 percent to close at 4,483.30 on Friday, although there was some profit-taking shortly before the weekend.

January is a seasonally strong period for equities as many investors take fresh position for the year ahead, pushing back some of the funds unloaded for window-dressing purposes at the end of the previous year.

Costa said this view was supported by the strong of favorable economic data coming out of the United States recently alongside the recovery of the US banking system. While Europe was still in a challenging situation, he noted "what else is new?"

The Philippine economic environment, he said, was also providing impetus for upbeat equities looking given the anticipated recoveries coming by the Semplor Sentral ng Pilipinas which, in turn, would result in a stable low interest regime.

The index rise to above 5,000, Costa said, would be supported by a prospective growth in earnings per share of 11-16 percent. That would translate to a price- to-earnings (PE) ratio of about 14 to 15x.

Index heading toward 5,000

Index heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the fund manager said, could climb to about P3,000 per share or near the P3,004 peak in 2007. From at P2,000 per share, Costa said PLDT's dividend yield would still be at about 6 percent, or better than long-term bond yields.

PLDT, which has a 16.28 percent weight on the index, closed at P2,604 per share on Friday.

Not like you, Costa sees a lot of upside from the mining, gaming, consumer, infrastructure and banking sectors.

DMR has Oriental Peninsula Resources Group (ORE) and Nickel Asia Corp. in its portfolio while Metro Mineral Resources International Inc. is among Costa's personal picks.

In gaming, DMR favors Leisure & Resorts World Corp., the partner of Belle Corp. in its upcoming casino/resort complex along Manila Bay.

On the consumer sector, Costa is upbeat on retailing fare. Puregold Price Club Inc. and Robinsons Retail are his picks.

Trial and horror

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bernal III

TALK of the business town these days concerns the Senate—the forthcoming drama there. It is, as beat-counters see most. In do, betting into a numbers game. For wagers they try to figure out how many senators are expected to side with which camp in the forthcoming trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona.

One analysis that I heard put the number of "undecided" to only 10 out of the 24 sitting senators. It is said that the others must be aligned with either the Corona camp or the Aquino-Drilon (DI administration.

If such is the mind of thinking among powerful players in business, the same thought must have occurred to those in both sides of the trial. Just think what both sides are prepared to do to win over those "undecided" senators.

What kind of horse trading, so he done by both sides, powerful as both of them are in their own ways, into the great hoo in my beverage report from the loggies in the government that time?

The horse-therefore in this case, one is democracy—the historic impeachment of the chief magistrate of the land—will rest in big.

***

I find the recent public statements of former Senator Hon. Sapiezaj worth noting here. He said Corona has already lost half the battle with his impeachment by the House of Representatives, and whichever way the trial turns out, the trial is still would have already destroyed his reputation and impair his credibility. What is here, in other words, Corona loses.

Aside from being a former senator and lawyer of former President Estrada, who was the only nationally elected official ever removed from office in the country, Sapiezaj also happens to be a principal author of RA 6713, known as the Code of Ethics for public officials, which requires among others all those in the government to file their statements of assets, liabilities and net worth to the SALN.

Almost four years ago, Sapiezaj went ballistic over the ruling of the Supreme Court that, on appeal, prevented us from taking a look into the SALN of the members of the judiciary.

Still how did the Supreme Court justify such a stance? Well the ruling said if it could protect the "subjective" of the judiciary.

Here are Sapiezaj's exact words, as taken from a report by the OCI (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism): "Why have the justices turned a cold ear to my filing?"

He went on: "The chief breach of confidential is to provide for that they can even remove a president, why should they be different?"

***

In business, they are interested in how the trial will play out the money angle to the matter of impeachment. Besides, Corona reportedly has a huge SALN if Corona reportedly has a huge SALN if Corona reportedly has a huge SALN if

An OPEN LETTER to PRESIDENT NOY

PIRA, Inc.
Philippine Insurers & Reinsurers Association

6th Floor, Champaca II Bldg
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Makati City
Tel. Nos. 811-4567 ; 811-4569 ; 811-4529
Fax No.: 813-8415

Ref No. 1-003/2012
January 3, 2012

His Excellency
BENIGNO SIMEON C. AQUINO III
President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang, Manila

Dear Mr. President:

Greetings and salutations to you and your good office.

We are the umbrella organization of non-life insurers and reinsurers, majority of whose members are small-and-medium-sized companies, catering to the insurance needs of individuals, enterprises, and corporations nationwide, and we write this formal Letter of Appeal to bring to your kind attention our current – and apparently, future – plight, brought about by the Department of Finance Order No. 27-06.

This DOF Order No. 27-06 prescribes graduated increases in insurance companies' paid-up capitalization, imposing a minimum of P125 million for 2010, P175 million for 2011, and P250 million for 2012.

It is, patently and without doubt, a discriminatory and unreasonable requirement, to the promotion of free enterprise amongst the small and medium enterprises which your administration strongly espouses.

Should the implementation of the DOF 27-06 take place for 2011 only the big companies shall remain, and the small-and-medium-sized insurers, meaning those with paid-up capitalization of less than P175 million will be forced to close shop and cease operations, thereby adversely affecting hundreds, possibly thousands, of employees and agents, depriving them and their own families and dependents, of their livelihood. Instead of furthering the State's policy of promoting full employment and generating sources of livelihood, it will have the opposite effect, creating even more unemployment and discontent, and running counter to this administration's plans and programs. Worse, the insured-clients of the small and medium-sized insurers will suddenly find themselves unduly exposed to the perils of loss or damage without adequate insurance protection following the closure of said insurers.

The government will also contradict itself, as well as send a conflicting message to the public, because while the government is pushing for the development of microfinance and entrepreneurship, it is in the same breath spearheading an initiative that will kill the very existence of the small and medium companies it hopes to develop, companies that have done well all these years. It is inconceivable how a government arm can champion the cessation of operations of companies that are running well and having no serious and legal or financial impediments, at a time when taxes are sorely needed by the government, unemployment is on the rise, and business is still on the road to recovery from the many natural catastrophes in recent years.

While DOF 27-06's intentions are noble, increased capitalization is not the sole measure of a company's stability, or of its capacity to shoulder risk, or of their ability to pay claims. There are other measures and mechanisms which can be used to ensure and determine insurer/reinsurer solvency and financial liquidity, such as the more technically-sound and realistically proportionate Risk-Based Capital (RBC) measure, which may be used in conjunction with the Margin of Solvency. An efficient regulatory system and a sound tax infrastructure can also be just as helpful.

We are, therefore, appealing to your compassion and good judgment, and seeking your intervention and understanding, in our plea for the suspension of Department of Finance Order No. 27-06, pending the passage of the Revised Omnibus Insurance Code. We hope we can have an audience with His Excellency to personally appeal our plight.

Thank you very much and more power.

Very truly yours,

MARIO C. VALDES
General Manager

MCV/mco

BUSINESS

GOINGS-ON

ALI bags award

FOR THE third straight year, Ayala Land Inc. was conferred the 2011 Platinum Award for All-Around Excellence in financial performance management acumen, corporate governance, social responsibility, environmental responsibility and investor relations by The Asset Magazine, a financial publication in Asia.

ALI was among the 10 corporations that were awarded by The Asset.

The Asset's Excellence in Management and Corporate Governance awards program provides listed companies an avenue for internationally benchmarking based on a range of metrics for financial performance and management acumen. It also recognizes the importance of sustainable growth which is why companies are likewise evaluated for "the quality of their corporate governance, social and environmental responsibility, and investor relations."

Airphil Express' new routes

MANILA, Express is opening new routes to Mindanao to help generate interest tourist interest in two culturally-rich and nature-abundant destinations—Pagadian and Butuan.

The airline is now offering Manila-Pagadian-Manila and Manila-Butuan-Manila daily flights.

PAL sale

AS PART of its year-long 75th anniversary celebration, Philippine Airlines is offering a special deal for domestic travelers: buy a one-way, economy-class ticket for P775 to any Laoag or Visayas destination, or P1,275 to any Mindanao point, and get a second domestic ticket for only P75.

Dubbed "Isa't isa sa PAL," the two-for-one deal also allows domestic passengers to enjoy business class for only P3,875 to any Laoag or Visayas destination and P4,975 to Mindanao.

By presenting this discounted ticket at any PAL ticket office, another ticket may be bought to any of PAL's 28 domestic destinations for the giveaway price of P75 (one-way, economy).

The discounted tickets are available from Jan. 6 to 11, 2012, for travel from June 16 to Sept. 30, 2012.

PPP revolving fund getting big boost

Multilateral partners seen matching local resources

By Riza T. Olchondra

ASSUMPTION! a "secure investment" roll-out of public-private partnership (PPP) projects, the government is crafting more funds for prebidding works before the revolving facility for this purpose runs out.

The PPP Center stands to get P500 million from the 2012 budget to replenish the revolving fund for PPP preinvestment studies.

Economic Planning Secretary Cayetano W. Paderanga Jr., who is also director general of the National Economic and Development Authority and multilateral agencies might match the P500 million or provide more.

About P284 million of the P500-million Project Development and Monitoring Facility (PDMF) fund is already being used for the preinvestment studies of 10 PPP projects slated for rollout this year, according to Cesario T. Catalla, executive director of the PPP Center, which manages the PDMF.

Unsolicited proposers have recommended additional funding, Catalla and Paderanga said separately.

The PDMF funding may be depleted by the middle of the year without any fresh funding boost. This was unexpected so early as last year. Thus, efforts to access more funding had started before the change of the year and grants from development partners are now being finalized, Catalla said.

The PPP Center will disclose the total funding it will be able to raise upon completion of all necessary documents, she said.

"With the additional funding, we can really work on several projects," Paderanga said.

The government must provide counterpart funding for whatever its development partners give. By spending on the feasibility studies, along with plans to tap more advances, the Philippine government is investing in its own PPP program, Paderanga said.

That's because the government is gearing up for a "secure investment" PPP program this 2012. About 36 PPP projects are lined up for bidding this year, 10 of which are getting PDMF support.

Since funds for preinvestment activities only get replenished when the projects get auctioned off, the revolving facility must be topped up while the bidding process to PDMF-supported projects are ongoing.

The P25-billion Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-New Water Supply is as the biggest project slated for bid out this year, according to the PPP Center. The tenders will be the P900 million-worth Interim Self-Sufficiency Program of the Department of Health.

The list of projects for rollout also include the P20.69-billion NLEX-SLEX Connector Road; P20-billion Subic Water; P9.36-billion Cebu Expressway (Cebu to Laguna Side); P13.2-billion LRT 2 East Extension; P10.44-billion PPP for School Infrastructure Project Other; 11; P93.15-billion Mactan Terminal 2 Airport Development; and P9-billion New Bohol Airport.

THELMA Dungo-Murillo (second from left) of the Department of Trade and Industry's public relations office, DTI-Ilocos Sur provincial director Grace Lapasanda (third from left) and a representative from the provincial government of Ilocos Sur (left) check out the products on display in the annual fair-trade Tawid Kan Pertuna held recently at Metrotrends, Pasig City. Exhibitors promoted the best of Ilocos Sur from food, furniture, health and wellness, and furnishings.

Spend more for Digitel, PLDT asked

By Paolo G. Montecillo

MINORITY shareholders of Digitel Telecommunications Philippines are requesting their calls for network giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) to shell out more money for its acquisition of Digitel.

In a statement, Osmeña Jr. Edmundo Sta. Lucy Lim and Amando Tan said PLDT's tender offer price for Digitel shares of P1.6033 a share seemed fair if based on the company's valuation on the stock market.

"The fact though is that PLDT bought 51.56 percent of Digitel's common shares at P60.2 billion [on] Jan 05, 2012 with the assumption of Digitel's liabilities consisting of cash advances and convertible bonds due in 2013 and 2014 with a redemption value of about P17 billion," the group's lawyer Cesli Lumaring-Ay said.

"The assumption of the conversion is uncertain because at the time of the purchase and even until now, they are still bonds and not shares," she said.

The said bonds and advances were acquired by JKIT from Digitel's former parent firm, JG Summit Holdings. This represented the money the conglomerate poured in to rehabilitate the operations of the telco.

"The sale and purchase agreement [JKIT and JG Summit] signed on March 20, 2011, stated that the said convertible bonds will be due in 2013 and 2014. These bonds can be converted into shares only if unpaid," Lumaring-Ay said. The tender offer price for Digitel shares, she said, should be P52.12 each.

BUSINESS

NIHONWELD
www.nihonweld.com

PNOC-EC to bid for 9 oil, coal prospects

Onshore, offshore areas in Palawan, Mindanao

By Amy R. Remo

PNOC Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) plans to apply for at least nine service contracts for the exploration and development of petroleum and coal blocks being offered by the government under the Philippine Energy Contracting Round 4 (PECR 4).

In a recent briefing, PNOC-EC chair and CEO Grandiano Lopez Jr. disclosed that the company was initially interested in four coal blocks and at least five oil and gas areas in Palawan and Mindanao.

Lopez explained that PNOC-EC—the upstream oil and coal arm of state-run Philippine National Oil Co.—preferred to bid for the blocks that were near the areas covered by its existing service contracts as it was more likely already familiar with these plums. The company's studies for its existing service contract usually extended to the adjacent areas, he noted.

PNOC-EC, however, would continue conducting additional studies for the areas it planned to bid for to ensure that these blocks would fit in its portfolio.

Under the PECR 4, the Department of Energy is offering 15 contracts for the exploration, development and production of prospective oil and gas areas in seven covering 7.92 million hectares in onshore and offshore Cagayan, Central Luzon, northwest Palawan, Mindoro-Cuyo basin, east Palawan and Cotabato.

Beyond, the 30 blocks up for auction are located in Quezon, Camarines Norte, Albay, Sorsogon, Masbate, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Bohol, Agusan del Norte, Misamis Oriental, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Sur, Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga Sibugay.

The company's planned participation in the ongoing PECR 4 will allow PNOC-EC to fulfill its mandate to explore, explore, develop, transport, distribute, trade in, import and export oil, gas and other energy sources.

It is also mandated to engage in the search for indigenous sources of energy from its establishment, PNOC-EC has undertaken various onshore and offshore oil and gas exploration activities nationwide.

At present, PNOC-EC holds interests in various service contracts (SC), including SC 38 or the Malampaya gas-to-power project; SC 63 (Bagty Galit); SC 47 (Offshore Mindoro); SC 50 (West Calamian); SC 59 (West Baldivis); SC 62 (East Sulu); and SC 57 (Cagayan).

PNOC-EC also holds coal operating contracts in Zamboanga Sibugay (COC 41) and Isabela (COC 121).

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Republic of the Philippines
SAMAR STATE UNIVERSITY
City of Catbalogan
SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR PRESIDENCY (SCP)

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the Samar State University (SSU) formally and publicly announces the convening of the Search for Presidency of the University per Board Resolution No. 432 s. 2011 dated December 20, 2011. Interested applicants including those who previously applied, if they meet minimum minimum qualifications and have not been disqualified, are invited to send their forthwith application to the Search Committee for Presidency.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Not less than forty-five (45) years old and not more than sixty-one (61) years old at the time of application;
2. A citizen of the Philippines;
3. Holder of an earned doctorate degree from a reputable higher education institution;
4. Known high moral character and possessed of integrity and probity;
5. Experience in administration (preferably in the academe), whether in public or private, for at least three (3) years;
6. Applicants must not have been convicted of any administrative offense or of any crime involving moral turpitude, whether the penalty is more than or not;
7. Disclosed weaknesses of other SUCs, whose term is not to expire within the six (6) months period from the search process, shall be allowed to be considered applicants for the same position post, provided that they possessed meet the aforementioned qualifications.

DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Formal Application Letter addressed to:

   HONORABLE PATRICIA B. LICUANAN
   Chairman, Commission on Higher Education
   4th Floor, HEDC Building, C.P. Garcia Ave.
   Diliman, Quezon City

2. Detailed and Informed Curriculum Vitae;
3. Certified true copy of documents in support of the data stated in the Curriculum Vitae;
4. Proposed Vision, Mission, and Development Goals for Samar State University;
5. Medical Clearance from the following government agencies, obtained not more than one (1) month from the date of filing of application:
   - Social Security;
   - Civil Service Commission (CSC);
   - Philippine Red Cross/Blood Bank (PRC);
   - Ombudsman (for government employees);
   - Institutional clearance where applicant is presently employed.
6. Official transcript of records;
7. Medical Certificate of Physical Fitness issued by a duly licensed government physician from an accredited government health institution obtained not more than three (3) months from the date of application;
8. Result of Neuropsychiatric Examination conducted by a duly licensed government psychiatrist from an accredited government health institution obtained not more than three (3) months from the date of application.

NOTE: An applicant who does not make any of the aforementioned minimum qualifications and cannot submit pertinent supporting documents shall be disqualified from these search process.

The above-mentioned documents must be submitted in one (1) original and two (2) certified true copies on or before January 13, 2012, 5:00 p.m.

DR. ARTURO L. PADILLO
University and Board Secretary I
Samar State University
Catbalogan City, Samar

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
PHILIPPINE RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(National Irrigation Administration)

IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT OFFICE
Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Norte
Dinglan, Dinagdanan, Agusan del Norte

INVITATION TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration through the Civil Contractors Association intends to apply the Sum of Twelve Million Seven Hundred Thirty Two Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Pesos (₱ 12,732,620.00) being the total cost of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for the Construction of Irrigation Canal Lining and Construction of Farm Ditches and Canal Structures with appurtenant works at Dinglan, Dinagdanan, Agusan del Norte.

The National Irrigation Administration now invites bids for the various projects of Agusan del Norte, Dinglan, Dinagdanan, Agusan del Norte. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

DESCRIPTION OF CONTRACT NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR CONTRACT (ABC)	DURATION
CANAL LINING AND FARM DITCHES	Small Irrigation Project Service Area	₱12,732,620.00	120 Calendar Days

Bidding shall be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least seventy five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens and the Philippines.

Bids submitted must include the Bid Security in the form of Cash, Cashier's/Manager's Check, Bank Draft/Guarantee or Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank, Bid Bond issued by a Surety or Insurance Company, or any combination thereof, in accordance with the above-stated amount.

Prospective bidders may obtain further information from the National Irrigation Administration, PRRI Compound, Maguindanao Drive in the Region, and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from January 10, 2012 to January 30, 2012 during office hours from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from January 10, 2012 to January 30, 2012 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Fifteen Thousand Pesos Only (₱ 15,000.00). However, Government Bidders may submit their bidding documents without the payment of the above-mentioned fee upon presentation of their Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) Identification Card and duly signed Letter of Intent/Application Letter. It may be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS), provided that Bidders shall pay the applicable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

The Implementing Administration will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on January 16, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Room, Maguindanao Drive, PRRI Compound, Dinglan, Dinagdanan, Agusan del Norte, which shall be open to all interested parties only to those who have purchased the Bidding Documents. Attendance of the Bidders' representatives is optional.

Bids must be delivered on or before January 30, 2012 at the National Irrigation Administration Compound, Maguindanao Drive, Dinglan, Dinagdanan, Agusan del Norte. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address and time specified above immediately after the deadline for the submission of bids.

The Implementing Administration reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184, without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to:

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GSE Law firm announces promotion and new hires

Vanessa Raymundo

Nicka Hosaka

Ryan Romero

GUERRERO GUICHARDO ESPIELA (GGE) LAW FIRM RECENTLY announced that Vanessa "Vanes" C. Raymundo has been promoted from Junior Associate to Senior Associate effective Jan. 1, 2012.

Vanes (UP College '03 and San Beda Law '08) actively handles referrals in the fields of corporate and commercial law and real estate such as corporate organization and restructuring, acquisitions, joint ventures and incentives.

GGE Law Firm also announced that Jennika (Nicka) Ann "Nicka" E. Hosaka and Ryan V. Romero have joined the firm as Junior Associates in Dec. 2011 and Jan. 2012, respectively.

Nicka (Ateneo '06, Ateneo Law '10) was formerly an Associate of Paner Rosales & Ypil Mirasol-at-Law practice by handling litigation referrals.

Ryan (UP '04, UP Law '08) was a former Associate of Rosario Samia & Castillo Law Office primarily handling litigation (criminal and civil law), corporate law, and intellectual property law.

Both Nicka and Ryan are members of the firm's Corporate promotions group.

GGE Law Firm's new address is at Suite 2404 Discovery Center in Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

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Historically, this was only taught exclusively for diplomats, ambassador and their protocol officers when they have to coordinate government visits/ activities. With the clamour of business leaders and government officials to learn this important subject, the Center for Global Best Practices (CGBP) in collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce is holding a special seminar entitled "Best Practices in Business Protocol" on Friday, January 13, 2012 from 8:00am to 6:00pm at the Edsa Shangrila Hotel, Mandaluyong City. Full details of the program may be obtained from website www.cgbp.org or Manila telephone 631-1555-8868/ 09. Cebu (032) 512-3136 to 37 and Baguio at (074) 420-0148.

When one knows your protocol, you commend more respect and gain a mark of distinction as someone with education, class, finesse and skilled at handling different types of people and situations. Mastery of protocol shows your goodness! It matters that you are considering yourself and the right way in events including protocol hurdles, signing ceremonies, ribbon cutting, conferences, business meetings, planning sessions and other important occasions.

This special program will feature Ambassador Jose Alvero Dalisi Filart, the former chief of protocol of the Department of Foreign Affairs. An eczema diplomat, he has enjoyed a solid experience in diplomacy and foreign affairs, being assigned as Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and France.

Another speaker to be featured is Ray T. Moreno, who is presently vice-chairman of the Center for Global Best Practices and concurrently holds the positions of chairman of the Philippine-Myanmar Business Council, executive director of the International Chamber of Commerce Philippines, and director for operations of the private sector National Competitiveness Council (2008 to 2010). He brings with him a wealth of experience having been the managing partner in Arthur Andersen Manila (1989-2000), the first honorary consul general of the Philippines in Ho Chi Minh City (1996-2000).

Also to share his/her Global Diplomat Best Practices will discuss protocol for spouses as she will talk about her experiences and best practices advices in her capacity as the wife of a former chief of protocol of Malacañang and the current ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Presently she is also the president of PMS Colleges.

This one-day seminar is best suited for company owners and the board, businessmen & entrepreneurs, management and its officers, government officials, international traders, negotiators & consultants as well as your spouse and children. It is also very useful to those in the tourism, service, and education sectors. Attend this once-a-year event, avail of the early bird and group discounts. Pre-registration is required in this limited-seats only event.

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Globe pays tribute to CSR partners

GLOBE Telecom recently held a special celebration to recognize its implementing partners which have supported the company's nation-building initiatives through a range of projects and advocacies that tap its competencies in information and communication technology.

About 200 individuals, representing various sectors of government, non-government organizations, academe, international development community, foundations, and Ayala group executives attended the Globe Corporate Social Responsibility Partner's Night at Bolera, Hotel Intercontinental Manila.

The event, which also witnessed the launch of the Globe Bridging Communities SIM card, highlighted the overarching theme of its CSR mission which is the "innovative and sustainable use of ICT for development" as well as the new approach in creating shared value with its partners. It showcased various CSR projects using ICT to enable and empower teachers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, environmental warriors and the youth.

GLOBE president and CEO Fernando L. Go (middle) presents tokens of recognition to community partners Bulakbol.com.ph (founder) Joy Bolaños represented by Princess Abdulkarim; Bread Beggar da Ga Reyes (left); and Social Kidlings represented by its marketing head Gina Mendiola (second from left). With them are Globe corporate communications head Yoly C. Crisanto (right) and Globe CSR head Rina L. Reyes.

STUDENTS from the Gabaldon Rodriguez Integrated School (without shoes), a Globe Bridging Communities-assisted school, provided entertainment at the event.

ENGAGED with Globe boss, executive director of Philippine Business for the Arts, Inc. Jose Lorenzo, consultant of Strategic Corporate Community Partnership for Local Development Philippines (SCOPE)

ILO and World Food Program deputy country director Jesus Ramon Quiapos engage in a light conversation

BACK, pressed from only played host to some 200 guests including, from left, José Mo. Lorenzo Tan, president and CEO of MWSS/MWSS Foundation Philippines; Jim Ayala, founder and CEO of Hybrid Social Solutions and Evangeline Mayuga, executive director of Globe's e-Foce.

HARI reaffirms commitment to social change

HYUNDAI Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), official distributor of Hyundai cars in the Philippines, has expressed its continuing commitment to be an innovative driver of social change through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm, HARI Foundation, Inc. The leading automotive firm celebrated its rebirthing as well as newly-enshrined partnerships with foundations that echo Hyundai's advocacy for a happier and wealthier world through the promotion of entrepreneurship, education, health care and environmental protection.

The Christmas lunch program, held at the Makati Shangri-La, paid tribute to HARI's partners in action building: Children's Joy Foundation, Inc.; Gawad Kalinga Community Foundation; Gilda Kapuso Foundation; Habitat for Humanity; HARI-ROH Foundation; Kusog Food for the Hungry International; Norwood Pedia Developmental Committee (NPDC); PDI Foundation; Polytechnic University of the Philippines; RMH Foundation; SOS Children's Village; St. Bakwitanon Project; and the UP Women Lawyers Circle, Inc. (WILOCI).

"We wish to thank these foundations for giving Hyundai this opportunity to move our country in an enduring way," said HARI President and CEO and HMF Foundation president Ms. Fe Perez-Aguado. "In the spirit of this occasion, we fulfill these Christmas wish lists through our humble episodes—our commitment to be always there to collaborate with them in seeking new ways to raise the value of social innovations. Furthermore, as thoughtful leaders, we look forward to fostering good corporate citizenship on a wider scale by building a critical mass of social investment who can shape a culture of genuine caring and cooperation for social and economic advancement."

HARI president and CEO and HARI Foundation president Ms. Fe Perez-Aguado

SEATED from left are Marissa Salcedo-Rufrancos, ALP of HARI's philanthropy and corporate responsibility division; Hon. Lisa Nicole Gomez; H. Schneider's Princess Grace Bloy; John Rhapsodist; Agnello Daniel Kalinga founder Anthony Dalisay; HARI chairman emeritus Richard L. Lee. Standing from left: PDI VP for Advertising Pepito Sison; Kusog Food for the Hungry International President Pastor Ken Nyong'Gale; UP Women Lawyers Circle, Inc. (WILOCI) Dean Frances Ad Women Lawyers Circle, Inc. president Atty. Velma Cardenas; Children's Village Makati Director Bienvenido Delgado; CMB Kapuso Foundation executive director Henry Peters Gokkiser's Jr.; Foundation executive director Rosemarie Bongayong; Habitat Foundation COO Amabella Pamilar; Kids Foundation chairman Richard Gomez; RMH-RMH Foundation chairman John Lazaro; NPDC for Research, PDI Trustee Lily Ridhard Poña; Developmental Committee chief of administration and finance Virginia Aguirre; Xavier School director Fr. Johnny Go; Gawad Kalinga secretary Dinky Soliman; Bakwitanon Foster Home of UP's Polytechnic University of the Philippines VP for student services Dr. Juan Bravo.

UNPAAA Ambassador to the Philippines Lee Hyo-Jae hangs a Symbol of Hope with Fe Perez-Aguado at the (hang) (L) program.

Ambassador Lee Hyo-Jae and Ms. Perez-Aguado are joined by Hyundai executives and HARI officials in the symbolic hanging of the Symbols of Hope.

According to Marissa Salcedo-Rufrancos, Assistant Vice President of HARI's philanthropy and corporate responsibility division, HARI Foundation's Christmas campaign 2011, highlighted by the HARI Tree of Sharing, was designed to raise funds for specific projects of these partner foundations.

The tree made the rounds of HARI's various Yuletide events, inviting customers, dealers, and other stakeholders to hang "Tokens of Hope," which are equivalent to a donation of P1,000 each. HARI Foundation is targeting a total of P100,000-P200,000 for each beneficiary foundation.

Salcedo-Rufrancos affirmed that the Tokens of Hope also signify HARI's advocacy for developing real, stable, and sustainable entrepreneurs at grassroots level.

The tokens made from bamboo and wood drawings were made by residents of Enchanted Farm Village, a Gawad Kalinga Center for Social Entrepreneurship, located in Rgo. Encanto, Angat, Bulacan. "We want to empower people to help themselves and their communities. And so we see private education, hospitals, health care services, a sense of environmental stewardship, and a culture of entrepreneurship, we contribute to building responsible and self-supporting individuals who can help others lead better lives. We want to build communities of social innovators who are capable of creating sustainable enterprises that can have positive impact on national growth."

HYUNDAI

The partners of "giving back" closer HARI's 10th year as a responsible corporate citizen on a meaningful note: as a close ally of foundations that count decades in their selfless dedication to building a better and brighter Philippines.

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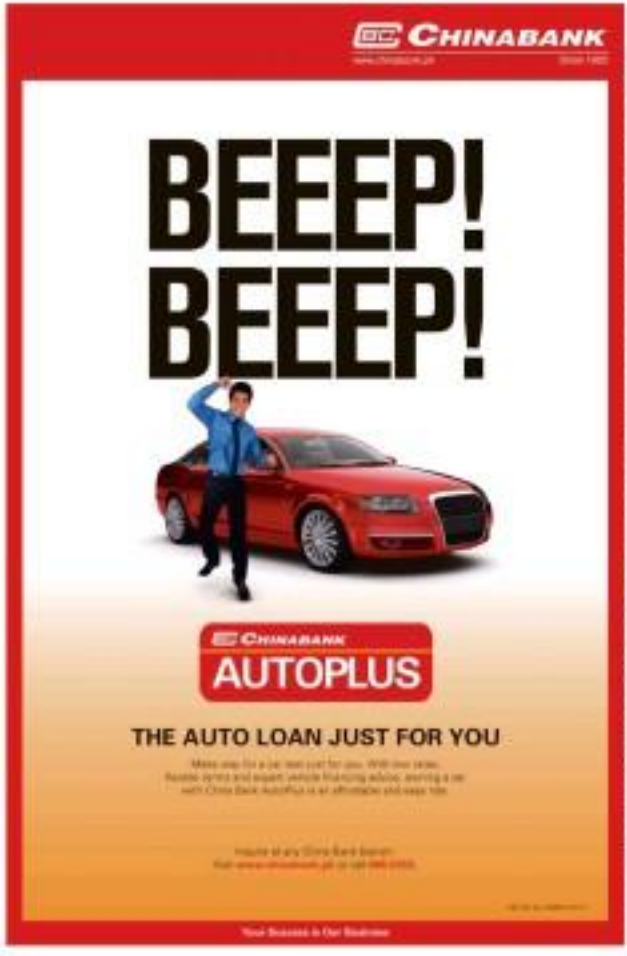

BUSINESS

Gokongwei firm gets high rating

Stable recurring income

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL credit watcher Philippine Ratings Services Corp. has maintained a triple-A rating on Gokongwei-led property developer Robinsons Land Corp.'s (RLC) debt paper.

Obligations rated "PRS Aaa" are deemed of the highest quality with minimal credit risk and suggested that the borrower's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligations was extremely strong.

Such rating was maintained on RLC's P4.6-billion outstanding bonds maturing in 2016.

In its rating assessment, Philratings noted that RLC was adopting a diversified business model wherein its property portfolio was grouped into two main income investment and development.

"Considering current market developments and conditions both globally and locally, RLC is now investing more in malls, office buildings and hotels while taking a more conservative stance in relation to the development of residential real estate projects. This move signifies that RLC is expected to have a more stable and strong recurring rental and lease revenue base from investment properties while at the same time pursuing opportunities through its residential development businesses," Philratings said.

The rating firm added that sustained robust economic Filipino consumers, the increase in consumer spending as well as ex-panding business process outsourcing business were expected to boost demand for residential space going forward and would continue to support growth in the commercial centers business.

Philratings reminded that RLC would be able to expand the current favorable level of its commercial centers division to about 910,000 square meters with the completion of the ongoing development and expansion projects. It cited upcoming new malls in Calamba, Imus, Pampanga, Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Magnolia in Quezon City, expansion of Robinsons Ermita and Robinsons Tacloban, as well as Phase 2 redevelopment of Robinsons Metro East within the second semester of 2013 up to the first half of 2013.

The office building division is likewise seen to expand its net leasable area by about 80,000 square meters given the completion of the Cyberscape Alpha and Cyberscape Beta office towers projects within the Ortigas business district by 2013.

Considering the growing demand particularly from local tourists for affordable accommodations, RLC's hotels division was expecting five Go Hotels in Palawan, Batangas, Tacloban and Boracay to be operating by the first quarter of 2012, it said.

RLC aims to have 30 budget hotels across the country over the next five years.

As of end-June 2011, RLC has 54 residential condominiums and 31 homemade subdivisions under its five residential brands (Robinsons Loisiana, Robinsons Residences, Robinsons Communities and Robinsons Homes).

Synergies among the companies within the Gokongwei Group were being appreciated by the presence of affiliate merchandisers such as Robinsons Department Stores, Robinsons Supermarket, Handyman and Robinsons Appliances in RLC's shopping centers, Philratings said.

RLC likewise believed that the Go Hotels enjoyed a competitive advantage given its affiliation with Cebu Pacific.

"There is also synergy derived from the strategy of mixed-use development. Sales of residential buildings are enhanced by buyers who want to live near malls and offices. The presence of condominium residents and office workers, in turn, increases traffic for mall retailers and would then further drive mall rental revenues," Philratings said.

A tale of two businessmen and how they pursue their passion

James C. Gonzalez of AG Capital Partners and Ricardo S. Po Sr. of Century Pacific Group are set to build their business businesses of commitment to their customers, how to stay focused on their passions and make it through. Arthur Lee and with the flagship project, Ayala Rockefeller's Kenneth Tan and...

James C. Gonzalez and Ricardo S. Po, Sr. are impassioned business executives. They do not belong to any exclusive people known by their initials alone: western PG.

JCG is the founder, Chairman and CEO of the financial and investment advisory firm AG Capital Partners based in Hong Kong. Chairman of APEC, a technology, media and telecommunications company, director of London-based Hemisphere Limited, a private equity investment firm, and co-founder of Infocast Corporation.

RSP Sr. is founder and chairman of the Board of the Century Pacific Group which owns and operates several top consumer brands such as Century Tuna, Argentina Corned Beef, 555 Sardines, Angel Milk and Birch Tree Milk. His leadership brought the group to prominence in Philippine business respect from the industry. RSP Sr. is the recipient Agapo Award which the Group received from the Philippine Marketing Association. He is also Vice Chairman of AirAsia and...

Individuals, they are giants in their respective fields, driven and motivated but called together by new opportunities and a passion when they come armed with all they have learned and what they mean to change.

They operate in behavioral businesses dedicated to a term driven by imagination. A response an attention motivated business or life.

In their words, AirAsia and is a world class, boutique and value developer. Behind the brand is a team of industry experts whose combined experience spans beyond 100 years, gathered from top firms here and abroad. Its flagship project is Ayala Rockefeller, the Philippines' first and only top-end high rise residential development registered under the US Green Building Council's LEED® program with a certification goal of Gold.

The challenging conception from considerations and the details behind it as story enough. But perhaps the first step in time was of Gonzalez's fascination, in the way they optimize opportunities, the processes, in the ongoing evolution of their businesses.

Q. There is clearly a vision, a unique set of goals that drives AirAsia and. How might you define that to customer terms?

JCG: Our vision is to create one of the top real estate development firms in the country although it will not be. As it suggested. We aim to achieve to be selection in the properties that we will develop, creative in the development concepts, and entrepreneurial and hands-on in managing the company.

RSP: The world is changing faster than ever before. There is a need to develop sustainable real estate projects that are filled with new technology, which will become the future standard. Our thrust in AirAsia and is to take a lead by design. Anticipating the needs of tomorrow today, then using the latest information and technology to design and build projects that will be relevant to our customers for many years to come.

Q. AirAsia and's leaders are associated with big business and big brands. And yet it sets out to be a boutique developer, which would suggest something deliberately smaller in scale. What unique benefits can the prospective buyer expect from boutique developers with big Business in their blood?

JCG: The term boutique means high quality product and close monitoring of the requirements of our buyers. AirAsia and aims to learn from its quality products and both carefully calibrate its product offerings to the market. Our products will be well thought out in design, pricing and delivery to our buyers. The balance learned in big business. It also means the accumulation of management, the successes in overcoming the disasters, etc. are all needed to be the owners of AirAsia and.

RSP: AirAsia and has a vision to create unique and iconic projects in highly strategic locations with good quality at good value. Our buyers and tenants can expect keen attention to details, very good service and a personalized touch.

Q. Property development is a game for considerable stakes with seemingly limitless land terms. There is no people someone which investors to look for the long terms. Things have changed and the question on buyers' minds is the same: Will AirAsia and really good be impossible?

RSP: Our reputation and credibility is considering are value above and things. Money can be made in both, but one's reputation and credibility can be worth a lot of zeroes over a very long time. Most of the time there are no short cuts, and efforts of developers must be made in favor of reputation and credibility. Truly, building trust between brands and consumers, buyers and partners is very important and difficult.

We understand this particularly in AirAsia and. As buying real estate is often an investment decision and is usually a long term investment, there must be a high level of trust between the buyer and developer.

Q3. And we are starting good value promises. We are aware of criticisms in the construction of Ayala Rockefeller and you expect that this will be the case as well when its turn over the units. Workers are excellent and well-experienced managers, mark team, the members of which pride on their individual track records in the industry. Our major shareholders: AG Capital and the Century Pacific Group, stand behind the promise and we are involved in ensuring that we meet our commitments.

TT: I note that we offer buyer property development companies with track records of many projects. Where we are differentiating AirAsia and though is the hands-on approach and in the attention to details that only a boutique developer can offer its buyers.

To know more about AirAsia and, you're invited to visit the AirAsia and Office Pavilion, RBG Arcade, Pasay City, 7th floor, 2000. To get there, from Commonwealth Ave, take MRT-3 Ayala Station and the Cubao, Ecom and Quiapo bound jeepneys. Alight at the Robinsons Galleria and walk to the right or the Ave., Magallanes, Pasay City, Philippines. Call 632-8888-8888. Visit www.ayalarockefeller.com.ph.

Ayala Rockefeller Project Manager Ricardo S. Po Jr. and Executive Assistant Arthur Lee discuss the construction progress of the Ayala Rockefeller project. The company's flagship project is already rising 28 floors at Pasay City.

BUSINESS

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NGCP prepares grid for wind power surge

By Amy R. Nunez

NATIONAL Grid Corp. of the Philippines, operator of the country's transmission network, is building a transmission loop in Northern Luzon to accommodate the growing number of wind power projects in the region.

Based on the draft Transmission Development Plan, the "Northern Luzon 230-kilovolt looping" is one of the new transmission projects of the NGCP for the third regulatory period covering 2011 to 2015.

"This project aims to loop the northernmost northwest 230 kV backbone in Luzon in order to provide adequate transmission facilities catering to the huge wind power generation potential in the region and at the same time improve the overall reliability of the transmission network," the draft TDP stated.

According to NGCP, the line from Bolo-Laoag 230 kV line and the Sapang Kio-Pagudpud 230 kV line are the projects directly associated with the Northern Luzon 230 kV looping.

The latter project, however, is still subject to the approval of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

"The identified location of the substations to be developed along the 230 kV loop, which will serve as the connection point for the wind power plants, are the closest sites to the various wind power plants in the area," the NGCP said.

Additional transmission lines may be needed given the number of proposed wind power projects in northern Luzon.

These include the projects of Lopez-led First Gen Renewables Inc. and Energy Development Corp., Energy Logics Philippines Inc. of the Delgado group, UPC Renewables, NorthWind Power Development Corp. and Monsoonpy Philippine Holdings Corp.

Local wind developers have been urging NGCP to put up the necessary transmission lines, not only in northern Luzon, but also within the so-called wind corridors in the country, to spur investments in the sector.

As for the country only has the 33-megawatt Northwind project—the country's first commercial wind power facility that was installed about eight years ago in Bangui, Ilocos Norte.

The Wind Energy Development Association of the Philippines (Wedap) earlier said it expects some $5 billion worth of wind power investments to materialize over the next few years.

The proposed projects can potentially add some 1,000 MW in new capacities and generate over 15,000 technical jobs.

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Purefoods salutes multiple intelligence in children

DID you know that there are other ways to gauge intelligence aside from scoring high in an examination or solving a long mathematical equation?

Purefoods Fun Nuggets acknowledges the multiple intelligences of children, believing that they can be sharp and smart in many different ways.

Children are considered body smart if they excel in sports, dancing or any activity which requires physical strength, agility and stamina. They like to play and excel in competitive games and enjoy physical exercises. They are active, lively and vibrant.

In partnership with the Department of Education, Purefoods Fun Nuggets launched its newest advocacy campaign entitled "My Body Smarts and Fun Nuggets" geared towards helping children develop their body smarts and encouraging them to live an active and healthy lifestyle.

PUREFOODS marketing assistant vice president and Marketing Director Jean Garcia-Dyal handing over the activity book to Deputy Head Yolanda Quijano

Department of Education Undersecretary Dr. Yolanda Quijano graced the unveiling of Purefoods Fun Nuggets' latest campaign spearheaded by Purefoods Hormel's assistant vice president and marketing director Jean Garcia-Dyal and product manager CJ Ferra.

"What we want the children to know is that they are all smart. They just have to identify areas where they excel and skills that they have, and to focus on developing these skills and talents by living a healthy lifestyle and eating nutritious foods especially those which are rich in protein," Perea said.

Many foods contain protein but the best sources are fish, beef and poultry. Protein builds up, maintains, and replaces the tissues in our body. Our muscles, organs, and immune system are made up mostly of protein. Our body uses the protein we eat to make lots of specialized protein molecules that have specific jobs. For instance, our body uses protein to build cardiac muscle like our heart. In fact, whether we're running or just hanging out, protein is doing important work like moving our legs, moving our lungs, and processing to form disease.

Fortunately, Purefoods Fun Nuggets is dedicated to support the physical development and well-being of the students. It is now loaded with protein which will give every child an extra boost so they can perform all their daily activities full of energy. Purefoods Fun Nuggets also comes in fun and exciting shapes that will surely entice children to eat and live healthy.

"Some kids today would rather stay in front of their computers and play basketball online than play it in a real basketball court or skip meals just to watch their favorite TV shows. Technology advances definitely have its pros but it might also be sending out wrong messages to the children. That is why we are advocating for this program, to reach the children the value and importance of being active, lively and vibrant using their own body powers," Cruz expressed when asked about the objectives of the program.

Purefoods Fun Nuggets will use amusing and engaging activity workbooks over 12,000 students from Grades 1 and 2 of selected schools in NCR.

DTGI and Subjeon with Purefoods Hormel's Product Manager CJ Ferra.

Sun Anti-Bill Shock Plan 350 offers 60 hours of online connectivity

TODAY'S FAST-PACED lifestyle requires one to be up-to-date with the latest trends in technology to fulfill their tasks at home and in the workplace. It is important to have at least an e-mail address, a cell phone number and to many, a number of social networking accounts because of this, being connected to the internet is just as essential.

Sun Cellular has something exciting for first-time prepaid broadband users aware of usage needs who want control of their internet bill.

With the Sun Broadband Anti-Bill Shock Plan 350, subscribers can stay online without worrying that their internet bill might reach ridiculous amounts. Originally packaged with Wi-Fi home internet usage, it has been extended to 60 hours per month for just P350. Once the 60 hours is consumed, only P50 per excess hour is charged. Usage hitting 115 hours in a month is supported by an anti-bill-shock app, allowing you to surf unlimited without further charges for P900. This means maximum control of internet usage without the worry of going over the budget. With the Sun Broadband Anti-Bill Shock Plan 350, there are no expensive surprises from the mobile broadband bill. At the same time, subscribers can enjoy faster, more reliable internet connection as Sun Cellular has increased the bandwidth speeds of all its broadband products to 3.6mbps.

To know more about the Sun Broadband Anti-Bill Shock Plan 350, visit the nearest Sun Shop, call Sun Info Hotline 333 using a Sun-powered mobile phone or 032 309 333 from any landline phone, text in www.sun.cellular.com.ph or visit the Facebook page www.facebook.com/sunbroadband for other options.

Photo Gallery

SUNTRUST COMES TO RESCUE OF SENDONG VICTIMS

SUNTRUST Properties, Inc. (SPI), a subsidiary of property giant Megaworld Corporation, formally turned over to GMA Kapuso Foundation a cash donation P503,756 for the victims of typhoon "Sendong." The fund was accumulated by the SPI officers and employees from their wage and salaries, supported expenses for year-end parties and raffle prizes, and from commissions of sales people. Photo shows SPI's EVP for marketing & training Jerry Rubio (third from left) and AVP for credit management Claire Lantinoza (fourth from right) handing over the cash donation to GMA's Mel Tiangco and Mike Enriquez, joining them are marketing manager Dominic Bolor (second from left) and office employees.

MoneyGram celebrates Chinese New Year with lantern painting contest

MONEYGRAM, a leading global money transfer company, is holding an on-the-spot Chinese lantern painting contest for amateur and professional artists aged 16 years and above on Jan. 14 with a cash prize of P10,000 going to the winner.

In cooperation with SM Mall of Asia, MoneyGram, will be hanging various events to encourage Filipinos' creative and artistic side of which is the lantern painting contest dubbed The Contest. "This event encourages the participants to think out of the box and create lanterns that showcase their talents. MoneyGram will be looking for a winning lantern to live with their Valentine's theme."

The contest will be held at the SM Mall of Asia Main Mall Atrium in Pasay City from 12 a.m. to 4 p.m.. All contestants will be provided a Chinese lantern (rectangular, 8.5 inches width and 12 inches in length). Contestants are asked to bring their own painting tools and watercolors, which will be the mediums of the lantern painting contest.

Winners of The Contest will be announced at the SM Mall of Asia Main Mall Atrium at 3 p.m. on Jan. 15. The runner-up gets 20,000 while P10,000 goes to the third place winner. All participants will be given consolation prizes. A grand exhibit of the Chinese lanterns made during the contest, along with other lanterns made by the Chan Lim family of artists and students will be on display until Jan. 23.

Registration forms can be downloaded from https://www.moneygram.com/MGI_US/PH. Interested participants can register at Global Pinoy Center located at SM Mall of Asia. Registration forms can also be sent to aliza@moneygram.com or call 800-3643 and look for Zhanine. Deadline of registration is on Jan. 12, 2012.

GRAND MONACO, STA. LUCIA JOIN FORCES FOR HOUSING PROJECT

DMCI Homes Estate Developers, Inc. (DMCI-HI) and Sta. Lucia Realty and Development, Inc. (SLRDI) recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement for a Joint Undertaking to develop a 171-unit mid-rise housing project within Grandmonde Evanston Village, Taytay. Total amount DMCI-HI shall construct the residential units as Housing Developer, while SLRDI shall provide the horizontal component as Subdivision Developer. Shown in Photo: Engr. Reynaldo A. Cayco, Ph. D., DMCI-HI President & CEO; Joselito R. Sevidzmallo, President, Sail Sales Realty, Inc. (Landowner), and Ramond B. Rubino, SLRDI President & CEO.

MIGUEL Garcia, president and CEO of DTSI, shows off the award. With him are, from left, Pietro Nicasio Dela Rosa, Avaya Philippines channels manager; Edgar Dorcoltes, Avaya country manager; Ray Yoshe, Avaya managing director for Asean and Affiliations, Jr., Avaya Product Head, DTSI.

DTSI Group clinches Avaya award

SYSTEMS INTEGRATOR and facilities developer DTSI Group has been named the Avaya Connect Philippines Business Partner of the Year for 2011, singling the company out as Avaya's best-performing business partner in the Philippines for the fourth year straight.

The Avaya award was made in recognition of DTSI's sound business performance in 2011. The global business communications systems firm rose to renewed revenues and customer satisfaction as well as expanded market coverage for the year.

Among Avaya Connect channel partners in the Philippines, DTSI achieved the highest annual revenues, had the largest number of experts certified on Avaya technology and demonstrated advanced technical expertise in implementing and configuring Avaya's products and solutions, according to Avaya executives.

"DTSI has been an important factor in Avaya's growth in the Philippine market for a number of years," said Edgar Dorcoltes, Country Manager for Avaya Philippines. "Aside from delivering excellent customer service and advanced solutions, DTSI has also supported Avaya in helping us extend our reach to a broader market across the country."

DTSI is an Avaya Platinum partner and a nine-time Philippines Channel Partner of the Year awardee. The company has consistently brought in major clients including leading firms in the telecommunications, business process outsourcing, and food industries. DTSI also closed the first million-dollar deal for Avaya in the Philippines.

"Customers are our top priority and we would not have won this award without them. We only want the best for our customers, given today's increasingly complex and competitive market. This is why we are pushing Avaya's proven, innovative contact center platforms," said DTSI president and chief executive Miguel Garcia.

MERALCO STRENGTHENS CONVERGYS OPERATIONS

CONVERGYS Philippines, one of the leading business process outsourcing (BPO) companies and among the largest employers in the country, signed a renewal contract of agreement (RCA) with the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) reflecting the two of their accounts in the Meralco Customer Value Program (CVP). Through the CVP, Convergys will benefit from lower rates for their operations during off-peak hours. This will enable Convergys to be more cost-efficient and flexible in operating its contact centers in Meralco's franchise area. Signing the RCA are Meralco Senior Vice President and Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications head Ernesto S. Padilla and Convergys Customer Management Business Indus Pueblo (3rd Pair) and Enrique Mendez Fernandez (CMFA) Philippines Managing Director Maria Zamora (third and fourth from left). Also present in the signing were (from left) Meralco Assistant Vice President and Private Sector Relationship Management head Ma. Cecilia M. Dumlao; Meralco Vice President and Corporate Business Group head Victor S. Corcuera; Convergys Philippines Services Corp. Facilities Director Jose Jones, Jr. and Convergys Philippines Services Corp. Facilities Manager Dennis Kadusen.

Increase in factory-gate prices accelerated in Nov.

By Bernie F.W. Dominguez

THE RATE of change in factory-gate prices picked up to a five-month high of 1.2 percent year-on-year growth in November, latest data from the National Statistics Office show.

The NSO attributed the recovery mainly to double-digit increases in prices of non-electronic machinery and petroleum products, which were pegged at 28.6 percent and 18.6 percent, respectively.

Results from the NSO's latest monthly survey of factory-gate prices—which covers 28 selected groups of manufactured goods established to the producer price index (PPI)—show that prices in seven such groups increased, 10 groups posted price declines and one showed no price change.

Showing single-digit increases year-on-year in November were prices of electrical machinery, food manufacturing, basic metals, rubber and plastic products, paper and paper products, tobacco, and wood and wood products.

On the other hand, prices of furniture and fixtures continued to dip in double digits and at an even faster rate of 45.3 percent.

Prices of transport equipment and miscellaneous manufactured items also plunged by 28.9 percent and 14.7 percent, respectively.

Other price losers in November were beverages, manufactures, mineral products, chemical products, fabricated metal products, footwear and wearing apparel, textiles and leather.

Prices of publishing and printing have remained unchanged for the 10th month in a row.

On a month-on-month basis, the PPI also increased faster at 0.8 percent from 0.7 percent in October.

Showing gains compared with October's were non-electrical machinery, paper, basic metals, chemicals, miscellaneous manufactures, and rubber and plastic products.

Losers included transport equipment, electrical machinery, furniture and fixtures, footwear and wearing apparel, food, nonmetallic minerals, petroleum, textiles, and leather.

Unchanged during the period were prices of textiles, tobacco, publishing and printing, wood and forest output.

The latest data on manufacturing output also show that the value of manufacturing output fell in October by 6 percent year-on-year, a reversal from a rise of 1.9 percent in September.

In October, the growth in volume of manufactures also fell by 6.3 percent, reversing from a rise of 2.5 percent in September.

PESO FAC

Investment Funds	Net Asset Value (As of 31 December 2011)	Net Asset Value (As of 30 November 2011)
Peso Bond Feeder Fund	1.7984	1.7938
Peso Government Fund	1.4921	1.4881
Peso Short Term Government Fund	1.3969	1.3938
Peso Short Term Feeder Fund	1.3969	1.3938
PESO Balanced Fund	1.4202	1.4164
Principal Protected 1	1.1002	1.1004
Principal Protected 2	1.1002	1.1004
Principal Protected 3	1.0000	1.0000
Principal Protected 4	1.1135	1.1135

Total Assets, Net Asset Value and Outstanding Units. Please contact the Fund Manager at 750-8888 loc. 7501 / 7502 or 892-4000 loc. 7501 / 7502 for the Guaranteed Rate of Return.

Past performance is not indicative of future returns. The value of investments may go up or down. Investments in the Fund are not deposits with the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation and are not insured by the Corporation.

For more details, please call 750-8888

Will the China bubble burst?

By Oscar B. Bautista

ENDSDAY seems to be worried that the threat of a looming bubble more than be looming China itself. Its latest prediction involved the United States and Europe in rapid succession.

Economists fear that since China is a key driver of the world economy today the impact of a China looming bubble on the Philippines and the rest of Asia would be disastrous.

This problem is on top of other questions that remain unresolved: 1.) will the euro collapse? 2.) will the US inflation resume?

Contrary to what many have believed, much of the Chinese boom is wrapped around retail.

China is expected to have gained by 9 percent last year buoyed by the 32 percent growth in investments in real estate.

China watchers attribute the strength of Chinese economy not only to luring which is not to throw in it more iron, but to throw lead and capital.

Chinese are huge savers by nature and they have no choice but to put their money in bank accounts (where interest rates have been forbidden. Those funds are then channelled to state-owned enterprises that create the buildings and infrastructure that have made the Chinese "miracle" a reality (Shades of 1880 GHD, GHD Honda, GM, etc.).

Fraser Howie, co-AM president, a one watcher who shared his thoughts recently with the financial community in Hong Kong's trade talk.

Huge fortunes were made by the Chinese "elites" who speculated on land or foreign prices and development.

But only well-connected people could get in on the ground floor, who could facilitate purchases from financial occupants and are permitted to invest in later stages of development with inside holding information—and their wealth grows every time a real estate is a pop, also preoccupation with prices leading over the past five years.

Nowadays, many buildings in commercial and residential areas are empty. Most infrastructure projects are underutilized—suggesting investments above the bubble. But construction continues because it creates jobs for the construction people and results for those associated with all that development.

The party is going to overdo the debt-fueled real estate boom in part of the five-year plan. This is an attempt to make the Chinese economy more reliant on domestic sectors and less on exports (manufacturing). There going to be a double-dip following on.

If the effect results in a big drop in real estate values, investors will suffer and the result can be in recession.

Reforms in other parts of Asia such as the Philippines can never claim our goods more cheaply than China—which prompted the renminbi of China's model, which is focused on jobs for low-end exports backed by state-supported expenditures.

Many portions of party shares have been in Ang Lately... and the need to narrow the income gap is the message in the third five-year plan (please see July 25 article).

But the problem is how to stop the flow of cheap capital from their companies. The investments, directly or through others, in real estate, the "elites" continue to exchange cheap capital across, which contributes to their continued importance to the party.

If the stress is curtailed, such property values drop—there would be a crisis in the financial system that could have wide ripple effects.

Also banks' loans to LGOCs and other entities, which could turn to bad debts, seen as their realities off or classified as special investment vehicles to create a semblance of regulatory balance sheets.

But the fact is, the state banks' capital comes from the savings of salaried people—pension funds, health provisions, etc.

Hence, are unlevered by the state banks in one form or another is shouldered by the state in the end. There is going to be millions of dollars being boosted by low-cost and spending capacity.

SOEs, under the banner of local industries (crunch families?), have developed the ambitions for project development, interesting real estate valuation, land sale, etc., to achieve GDP growth in their regions (but not employment opportunities, which are reduced).

Many of the developed infrastructures do not fit in the national strategic scheme of things. Hence, capitals are optimized—and underutilization is visible in many places (see July 19 HSBC article).

If China's bubble bursts, they will be less inclined to buy goods and services (from both imports and loans). There will be less demand for raw materials, minerals—a sharp drop in commodity markets, global trade in general.

China will do good in managing the decline of its economy to avoid a hard landing, which will not be allowed to happen before the change-over leadership in 2012.

The Chinese will show that the US and China are in the same global economic boat. for US to successful export of technology to help China grow its consumer sector. The Americans saved China to be stable and growing—so they not only in US but also the global economy.

A clear understanding of the Chinese structure will allow the Philippine economic team to anticipate the possible fallout, enabling the country to take advantage of opportunities that will open as a consequence of the possible China bubble burst.

The team members need to think out HOW the strategies in the seven plan and innovations with a stronger public-private partner institutions.

As mentioned by DF School of Economics' Raul de Dios, the underlying challenge is to pursue internal strategies as the basis for future growth. (The author a former secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry and serves as chair of the National Competitiveness Council)

Miners laud court order vs Zamboanga open pit ban

By Rizz T. Ordinario

THE CHAMBER of Mines of the Philippines (CMP) has expressed "great relief" that a local court granted a preliminary injunction against an ordinance banning open-pit mining in Zamboanga del Norte.

CMP said the order provides hope that province officials of South Catabato will reconsider that position on valuable ordinance that effectively prevents their constituents from reaping the benefits of transforming minerals into wealth such as that being enjoyed by hundreds of employees and their families as well as thousands of beneficiaries in host and impact communities of TVIRO.

In mid-2011, the outgoing Iqbal Gordon government passed an ordinance against open pit mining, threatening the mineralite for the BLA. Bihan Tungsten-copper-gold project led by global giant Intrum Copper. The ordinance is still under debate.

"Already the court (in Zamboanga del Norte) recognizes the excellent track record of TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc. (TVIRO) in protecting the environment and in advancing the interest of its host communities ... it is crystal that under the advocacy of CMP and all its member companies," the industry group said.

TVIRO has said that it is now preparing for a depositable location that the ordinance is "invalid and unconstitutional."

CMP said the court order is well received by the industry and the investment community.

The mining industry, CMP said, is that is opening its call for the national government to act on fast-tracking confirming national land laws that will open new resource attracting countries to Philippines. Region. Again. BIS. development agenda.

So the local government unit (LGU) is fully appreciate responsible mining, the industry has to continue to offer the President's Minerals Policy Group announcement that has promised to pro-Executive Order that will bring increasing taxes.

There is also "a compelling need" for the Policy Group to recommend to Congress amendments to RE 3099 and RA 7076 so that the courts participating process, regulations, control, and supervision of small-scale mining operations be given back to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which has the technical competence to deal with environmental and safety-related issues on mining, CMP said.

Environment Secretary Ramon JP Paje has also said he "welcomes" the court action in Zamboanga del Norte but has so far declined to make further comment.

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SEMINA: Korean investment & trade agencies and SMEs-B2B meeting (ICT business enterprises) to attend the "e-Smart World Asia" ICT Forum & individual business meetings with Korean ICT companies

Below is the two-day program of activities and list of participating Korean companies:

Korean Participating Companies	Products/Services	Website
National Information Society Agency	Public IT Policies and Industry Trend	www.nia.or.kr
[illegible]	[illegible] Mobile Platform, IPTV/Mobile Enterprise Application Platform	www.mtm.co.kr
Hyosung (Ltd.)	Fixed Solution and Guardian Solution, Terminal Operating System, Optoelectronic Cargo Trace System, Electronic Lecture Board, Desk	www.hyosung.com
Korea Automation Holdings Co., Ltd.	Automatic Conformance System, Traffic Signal Violation Enforcement System, Educational Vehicles Protection System	www.kahold.co.kr
Infoware Ltd.	Infoware HDB, SMMS Surveillance	www.infoware.com
Intelligent Web Inc.	Virtual-shift (Backup Software)	www.intelligentweb.com/eng/
Jungle.Net	GIS Software (Geomatic Information, Geomatic Database Pro), Geomatic Geospatial Service	www.jungle.com
KEI	Modified Shadow Mask Plate	www.kei.co.kr
Kingbase	Enterprise Application Integration Solution, B2B Automation Platform	www.kingbase.co.kr
Hyundai-com Co., Ltd.	IT Mobile Phone, Cloud Fax, B2B Mail System	www.gfax.co.kr/ www.hmail.co.kr

This "e-Smart World Asia" ICT Forum will be on 16-18 Jan. 2012 at World Interiors Market - Pasay Exhibition
Day 1 (Jan. 16): Opening Ceremonies and Asian ICT industry and Product Presentations
Day 2 (Jan. 17): Pre-arranged individual meetings for Korean companies @ ICT project developers, bankers, bidders from selected Asian countries including the Philippines

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BUSINESS Monday

After Abreeza Mall, Floirendos now go into international port biz

By Joeilo R. Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—The Anflocor Group of Companies, which is owned by the Floirendo family, announced it will build an international container terminal in Panabo City in Davao del Norte starting first quarter of this year.

Alexander Vitorio, Anflocor president and chief executive officer, says the company has finalized a deal with Mindo Consession last week for the P2.7-billion container terminal project.

The planned container terminal will rise on what used to be the wharf of banana firm Tagum Development Corp., which is also owned by Anflocor.

"We are hellish that this project will catalyze the economic development of the region by enhancing global trade through the construction of the modern container port facility," Vitorio says in a statement e-mailed to Business Monday recently.

He says Anflocor had planned the new operations at the terminal during the first quarter of 2013.

"This project is seen to create faster turnaround time of vessels, orderly ingress and egress resulting to lower incremental of delivery trucks, reliable ships in facilities for reefer cargo and the capacity to accommodate larger vessels due to its deep draft," Vitorio says.

On the local economy, he adds Anflocor has projected that the container terminal will generate investments and more job opportunities.

The Floirendos while more known for their huge banana plantation in Davao have been diversifying their business.

Last year it opened the P5 billion Abreeza Mall in Davao City.

The mixed-use structure combines shopping, residential and business establishments in one integrated complex.

Mixed-used concept pioneer and one of the country's leading real estate developers Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), in partnership with Davao-based Aseo Group of Companies (Anflocor), is behind the multibillion project.

Centrally located along J.P. Laurel Street, Abreeza is just the first phase of an ambitious development that will include an office building (with more retail outlets in the ground floor), a 28-story residential condominium and an 11-story businessmen's hotel called Rukais.

ALI's partnership with Anflocor dates back to the 1980s when the two conglomerates teamed up and built a residential resort in Isidro Village, Malalag. They started sales on Abreeza way back in 2011, and the project was revived and construction began to earnest in 2008.

Anflocor provided the land, Ayala, a new company formed out of this partnership, is directly in charge of Abreeza.

ARTIST'S perspective of the proposed international container terminal.

A CSR project for protecting the Bataan National Park (or why our forests cannot be left solely in the hands of government)

Felicito C. Papa

THE PROJECT was signed after the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the Manila South Tollways Corporation (MSTC) signed a Business and Operations Agreement on the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) to usher in money payment of the debt service obligations of BCDA for its construction. MSTC must promote the use of SCTEx to customers. But as traffic volumes increase, so does carbon emissions. As current and operator of the expressway, BCDA and MSTC both an obligation to offset the effects of the additional emission (the rule of thumb says it takes 12 trees to soak up the carbon spewed out from a motor vehicle). Thus, if the volumes increase by 16,000 vehicles, they must plant 120,000 trees.

The problem, however, extends beyond planting additional trees. The existing forest of the Bataan-Zambales Mountain Ranges, or whatever remains of them, is seriously threatened and must be preserved. The Subic Clark segment of the SCTEx and the Capas-San Fernando-Olongapo highway cut through the midpoint of these ranges which now serve as the carbon sink for the emission of vehicles that ply through these routes. Named after the Bataan National Park, one of the National Integrated Protected Areas (NIPAS) created by law in the 1930s, and of late Pinatubo have been severely degraded. Grass, rather than trees, and landslides appear as raw wounds on the vertical terrain greet motorists' eyes. Mt. Santo, the highest peak in the famous National Park, has a taller sister than that of Mt. Pinatubo. It means that its explosion thousands of years ago was a bigger bang than that of Mt. Pinatubo. Shrouded from the peak, the wildest area covered with thick forest which hides its rivers and waterfalls, and is home to its rich wildlife. The park is the envy of biodiversity in the region as that the late botanist, Leonard Co, spent weeks doing a field survey of its flora.

But the view from above was deceiving. Twitters recounted that as they went down the cockpit, the temperature suddenly felt 5 degrees warmer. A few hectare swaths of felled and burned trees greeted their eyes, ending a 3-year garden trail of trees, plants, birds, butterflies, flowers and clear streams. It was one thing to be consigned to the upward encroachment of lowland population but the destruction of the think foliage of the rubber's would be high-breaking. Cutting down its forest would lead to reduced evapotranspiration which in turn would result to less precipitation. Losing the watershed that feeds the river systems of the towns lower surrounding the Bataan National Park would mean the drying up of the croplands of lowland communities. But when the monsoon rains come, there would be no forest canopy to shield the barren earth. The fertile humus would slide down as thick mud on the swollen rivers, silting streams and rivers, irrigation dams and canals. Dwellers in coastal villages and along river banks may, hopefully, not meet the same fate as the victims of Sendong but they will not be spared suffering hunger from subsequent floods and drought.

Satellite imagery

The BCDA-MSTC-CDB Project will make use of satellite images, just like the Amazon Indians who use Google Earth, global positioning (GPS) and other technologies in protecting the rainforests by keeping tabs on loggers and takers. The images will be as close to real time as possible, unlike the 1988, 2002, and 2006 Landsat ETM images of the Bataan National Park available at HAMRIA. The time interval between the images was too long to be of any practical use.

A concerned group of executives from Watson Technical Services Inc. volunteered their services to develop a mobile phone app that can be distributed to the public to allow them to contribute to save the Bataan National Park. The app features will enable users like residents, Bantay/Kalikasan groups, mountaineers and trekkers to take and upload pictures of pinoys who have illegal logging and clearing ten cut-downed, and store locations via GPS. They can geo-locate pictures through Google Maps, share photos and comments in social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. More eyes monitoring equals less crimes. The app will be promoted in target users by posting in expressway toll gates the QR code which will lead them to the site where they can download the app. If successful, this can be replicated in other NIPAS.

Governments make lousy conservationists

It is generally recognized that most governments make lousy forest conservationists. The Economist reports that worldwide, deforestation accounts for most historic manmade emissions. It still continues at 13 to 15 per cent of total, more than the share of the world's ships, cars, and planes.

The record for the Philippines is no different. In 1900, the country had 21 million hectares of forest or 70 percent of total land area. In 1980, the forest area was down to 10 million hectares with another 1.2 million hectares of mossy forests.

The case of the Bataan National Park is a story that is probably repeated in other NIPAS in the country. It was not the forest rangers that discovered the illegal clearing inside Mt. Natib's caldera. (It was the robbers), and if the clearing had not been on their path, they could have easily missed it.) There are only six forest rangers, each one having responsibility for 10,000 hectares of forests. There is no way they can cover the entire area. While we have powerful technologies available, we do not use them.

A architect of the strategies in saving our forests is definitely needed. Town governments, local and national non-government groups, friends, rotary, and goons are worth so little that ways must be found to make rounding forests more valuable than cutting down. For example, where locals get tourism revenues, the forest is thick with trees. We must also learn from the indigenous people who live in harmony with nature because of their deep understanding of the forest ecosystems. They were there long before the forests were included as protected areas.

And finally, we can take a cue from an international endeavor known as Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) which is based on the "idea that rich countries should pay poorer ones not to cut down trees." One reforestation program pays targets for people to plant trees in denuded areas but they know the saplings in either for lack of water, or be overgrown by weeds or cared, sometimes deliberately, by fire. Why? Because they can be hired to plant again with the next reforestation budget.

Shouldn't it be more effective if payment is based on survival rate monitored by satellite images? And for a change, why not pay the local people to guard and keep the forest standing forever? Top BCDA or banking interest (DBP, etc.) can initial briefing of $49.3 billion from Norway and Great Britain, will pay Indonesia for not cutting its forest (see gain oil plantations.) Or get a company with a green advocacy to adopt a forest. Or include the project among those supported by the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program of DSWD. Inclusion criteria will be almost all because the project is self-selecting. There is no doubt that upland dwellers in our forests' fringes are among the poorest of our people.

(The writer reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is chair of Bases Conversion and Development Authority and former member of the Board of Regents of Twitters, representing the 1st district of Bataan. Feedback at map@globelines.com.ph. See previous articles, please visit www.map.org.ph)

MSD positions itself for steady growth

MSD, known as Merck in the United States and Canada, held its research and development (R&D) and business briefing at its global headquarters, highlighting the company's research strategy, including candidates from its R&D pipeline, and providing an update on its plans for growth.

"Early in the year, we said 2011 would be all about executing our growth plans," said Executive Vice President, Global Human Health Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer "and there can be no mistaking that MSD is doing just that. We are implementing a four-part strategy to drive top-line and bottom-line performance with the aim of realizing significant shareholder returns over the longer term.

"We are focused on making the right investment decisions across our business while continuing to advance and augment our late-stage pipeline. Portfolio-critically, MSD is about translating cutting-edge science into medically important medicines and vaccines that save, extend and improve lives throughout the world. Our strategy is to leverage innovation being the single biggest driver of value over the long term for patients, customers and shareholders."

At HRH received 2011, the company focused on accelerating top-line growth, reducing costs, allocating resources to drive growth and advancing and augmenting its pipeline.

"Three consecutive quarters of top and bottom-line growth, coupled with strong expense management, demonstrate MSD's ability to consistently perform, while at the same time make the strategic investments necessary for the future," said Frazier.

Through Sept. 30, 2011, MSD delivered 5-percent top-line growth, increasing sales by nearly $2 billion. MSD grew its non-GAAP EPS by 10 percent year-to-date, even after reinvesting more than $500 million in growth opportunities and new product launches. Since the merger with Schering-Plough, MSD achieved $2.8 billion in net synergies.

"This far in 2011, MSD has received approval for five new drugs and has filed for approval on five more. Additionally, to date, MSD signed more than 20 agreements with a broad array of partners, many of which strengthen the company's presence in emerging markets.

"As we continue to implement our growth strategy, our aspiration for Ethid year is to advance an innovative R&D pipeline, deliver strong operating performance to drive robust sales at or near the full-year 2011 level and continue reducing our costs to deliver a leveraged P&L."

MSD intends to achieve long-term, sustainable growth by delivering on its four-part strategy for investors being the single biggest driver of value over the long term for patients, customers and shareholders.

At HRH received 2011, the company focused on accelerating top-line growth, reducing costs, allocating resources to drive growth and advancing and augmenting its pipeline.

"Three consecutive quarters of top and bottom-line growth, coupled with strong expense management, demonstrate MSD's ability to consistently perform, while at the same time make the strategic investments necessary for the future," said Frazier.

Through Sept. 30, 2011,

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Amid US jobs gains, worries persist

Faced with falling sales, traders now look to other markets

NEW YORK—Friday's encouraging-than-expected December US jobs growth figures drew a sharp contrast with European members, but staffing executives who track labor demand on both sides of the Atlantic caution Europe's impact on jobs in the United States may yet prove deeper than it has so far.

Executives in the temporary staffing and employment services field say anxiety about a likely recession in Europe keeps cropping up in conversations with clients and, in some cases, a pausing hiring plans on hold.

Faced with falling sales and profits in Europe, multinational clients may look for offsetting savings in other markets, including the United States.

Randstad Holding NV, the world's second-largest temporary staffing provider by revenue, offers one anecdote to illustrate how foreign weights on US jobs.

Randstad's recruitment outsourcing business, Sourceright Solutions, which handles large-scale hiring of as many as 3000 people at a time, has a backlog client that tentatively plans aggressive expansion in 2012. But the client's plans are being held hostage by Europe.

"There's still caution around Europe and how they could impact the US," said Jonnie Hoge, Randstad senior vice president and chief employment analyst. "That is (client's) biggest concern right now, though they seem optimistic about all the economic indicators in the US moving in the right direction."

Uncertainty persists even as the US economy improves by many measures. US manufacturing grew at its fastest pace in six months in December—a sharp contrast to the eurozone.

Pending home sales are the highest since April 2010 and US consumer confidence is at an eight-month high.

Friday's employment report improved that picture. The US economy added 200,000 nonfarm jobs last month, 30,000 more than expected, and the jobless rate slipped to 8.5 percent, the lowest since February 2009.

Seventeen in financial services has slowed and is likely to be "lighter" this year, said Scot Melland, chief executive of Dice Holdings Inc., which runs specialized job websites focused on professional categories.

"We've seen job postings for the industry in a whole decline over the last six months," Melland said. "It's really caused by the uncertainty that the industry is facing (from) the European debt crisis and some regulatory uncertainty here in the United States."

By contrast, technology workers remain in demand and energy markets are looking at record job growth in 2012, according to Dice.

Friday's report showed an unexpected decline in temporary help payrolls, which are historically a strong predictor of wider labor trends. But staffing industry insiders said the dip does not square with their own business and could be an anomaly due to fluctuations in seasonal factors.

AFP, BLOOMBERG

EMPLOYMENT program representative Mark Robbins (left) explains unemployment insurance payments to a client at the Employment Development Department office in San Francisco. AFP/FILE

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Asia economies look to keep Iran oil flowing

Amid tension, China seen to 'squeeze Iran on pricing'

BEIJING—China, the biggest buyer of Iran's oil, has publicly rejected US sanctions aimed at Tehran's energy industry while American officials Japan and South Korea are scrambling to find a compromise to keep critical supplies flowing.

Beijing is buying less Iranian crude this month, but analysts say China is unlikely to support an oil embargo. Instead, they say, the country pushes might be a tactic aimed at obtaining lower prices in the West squeezes Tehran.

The sanctions approved by President Barack Obama on New Year's Eve have highlighted the importance of Iranian oil supplies to Asia's economic engine economies. They have led to a clash of interests between Washington and key commercial and strategic partners over efforts to stop Iran's nuclear program.

"We are considering our response and are closely discussing the matter with the US," a Japanese Foreign Ministry official, Kazuhiro Kiwase, said Friday.

A South Korean foreign ministry spokesperson said this week Seoul is in talks with Washington aimed at "minimizing the negative impacts" of sanctions. South Korea imports 97 percent of its oil and depends on Iran for up to 10 percent of its supplies.

China's foreign ministry rejected the sanctions this week and called for negotiations. Among onshore scholars judging might defy Washington, and Beijing relations between the world's biggest and second-biggest economies.

"Sanctioning is not the correct approach to easing tensions," said a ministry spokesperson, Hong Lei. "China opposes the placing of one's domestic law above international law and imposing unilateral sanctions on other countries."

US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is due to visit Beijing and Tokyo next week for talks that officials say will include Obama's action.

Obama would be the toughest part of Washington's thorny diplomatic challenge as it tries to enforce the sanctions. The fast-growing Chinese economy is the world's biggest energy consumer and imports half its oil.

The sanctions target financial institutions that do business with Iran's central bank by barring them from opening or maintaining correspondent operations in the United States. It would apply to foreign central banks only for transactions that involve the sale or purchase of petroleum or petroleum products.

Japanese and South Korean institutions, with a larger US presence, would be more exposed to such penalties. But Chinese institutions also do business in the United States and Beijing might see trade reprisals as an escalation in its foreign affairs.

About 11 percent of China's oil imports in 2011 came from Iran, or about 360,000 barrels per day, a floor that increased to the latter half of the year, according to oil industry analysts Argus Media. The daily average for November was 427,000 barrels, close to a third of Iran's total oil exports of 2.2 million barrels a day, Argus said.

Analysts say China would have a tough time replacing that supply.

This month, Chinese buyers have reduced daily purchases of Iranian crude, though that apparently stems from price negotiations and a payment dispute that began last year, according to a Singapore-based trader.

It is "unlikely (for reality of possibility)" that a small reduction in Chinese purchases might be "a shrewd attempt to squeeze the Iranians on pricing," said Victor Shum, an energy analyst for Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

"So the pressure gets more intense on Iran and Iran wants to ensure its oil revenue, the new Iran will be eager to keep China as a customer, and China will be in a good position to negotiate a good price," Shum said.

Iran, a China's third-biggest oil supplier after Saudi Arabia and Angola.

The importance of Asian sales makes it unlikely Tehran will make good on threats by some officials to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which oil oil flows, and Mon.

That would "really hurt Iran's important customers in Asia—namely China, Korea and Japan," he said. "He supplies wants to ingot to buy customers."

Japan is especially dependent on imported oil and natural gas, one-third of it from the Gulf, after shutting down nuclear reactors following last year's tsunami, said Kiichiro Tsuiki, director of the JIME Center at the Institute of Energy Economics Japan in Tokyo.

Japan's foreign minister will be visiting major oil exporters Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar in the next few days on a previously scheduled trip, Inoi Tanaka said it was unclear what her trip would get directly involved in trying to line up additional oil supplies.

"There are some thorny issues between the US and Japan, but since we're so dependent on the US forces for our national defense, I don't think we have any other choice but to follow the lead of Washington," Tanaka said.

AP

AH MANNAH oil worker repairs a pipe at an oil refinery in Tehran, Iran. China may preserve for the toughest part of Washington's thorny diplomatic challenge as it tries to enforce the sanctions. The fast-growing Chinese economy is the world's biggest energy consumer and imports half of its oil. AP

Amid US jobs gains, worries persist

From page B1-1

Demand for temps has been steady if unspectacular, said Joel Cappirelli, vice president of marketing for Yoh, a Philadelphia-area staffing company that focuses on professional categories such as finance and technology and whose clients include SAP AG.

"We're hopeful the pace will pick up a little bit," Cappirelli said, adding that Europe was so far not affecting specific workforce decisions, but was a factor in overall client confidence. "Capital is still there to be put, but we do see it flowing a little bit more freely."

Tip Clifton, who heads North American operations for Adecco SA, the world's leading staffing company, said Adecco is expecting "significant pauses" in Western Europe, which may already be in recession. Even strong markets, such as Germany, are expected to slow, although developing markets in Eastern Europe are likely to grow this year.

Clifton sees a risk in uncertainty during the effort of Europe's lawmakers on the US economy. Large employers, instead of investing to accelerate growth, may curtail spending to boost profits in markets that are holding up relatively well, he said.

"If you go to a US multinational company and they look at what they're facing in Western Europe in the next year, it understandably translates into that much more pressure on the markets that are performing," he said. "They've got to find how much more they can save because they have a hole in Europe to dig out of from a profitability perspective," Reuters

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Clockwise from top left: Jonah Go, Chief Marketing Strategist; Malu Dy Buncio, Chief Business Development Strategist; Chipoi Encarnal-Go, Chief Service Strategist; Donald Lim, Chief e-Marketing Strategist; Ruben Ticzon, Chief Sales and Negotiations Strategist; Benedicto "Turit" Cid, Jr., Chief Brand Advisory; Emilio "Jing" Manzano III, Chief Distribution Strategist

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Fed authorities push more help for US housing

Officials say there is urgent need to help 'frustratingly slow' recovery

NEGRI, N.J.—Three top Federal Reserve officials aggressively pushed on Friday for more action to help the housing market, saying the government should be looking at ways to help the sector in order to speed the economic recovery.

In separate speeches, the Fed officials—William Dudley, president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank; Fed Governor Elizabeth Duke; and Sandra Bloomquist, president of the Boston Fed—warned that the fragile housing sector was impeding a stronger US recovery.

Their remarks came even as a robust jobs report provided fresh evidence that the economy was gaining.

The push for action came two days after the Fed entered the thorny debate over how to use the two main government-run mortgage finance firms, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, to turn around the housing market.

The housing sector was at the heart of the financial crisis and recession and has continued to hamper the economy.

A 35-percent decline in US housing prices since 2006 has resulted in an estimated $7 trillion loss of household wealth, and about 12 million US homeowners are currently underwater on their mortgages.

Policymakers need to consider how to ease access to credit and to help the country's "frustratingly slow" economic recovery and "unacceptably high" unemployment, Dudley said in a speech in New Jersey.

Monetary policy should work to complement actions by other US policymakers, which together could help put stability to home prices and turn around the housing market within a year or two under good conditions, he said.

Dudley outlined potential actions—from providing financial support to homeowners who lose their jobs to encouraging the build-up lenders have set aside to guarantee debt by banks and lenders, which he said could free up newly tight credit.

He also advocated having the two government-sponsored enterprises reduce principal on delinquent mortgages and on loans to homeowners who owe more than their homes are worth—a step their regulator has rejected now of concern it could drive up the cost of taxpayer support.

Duke, speaking in Richmond, Virginia, said new policies that rely on the two firms that have already soaked up about $360 billion in taxpayer aid were necessary.

"Policymakers should at least consider policies that take into account the role the GSEs could play in hastening the healing of the housing market rather than focusing entirely on minimizing losses to the GSEs," she said.

Bloomquist, the Boston Fed chief, said one way to shore up housing would be for the central bank to buy more mortgage-backed securities.

"Given the low inflation rate and weak labor markets that are both likely to persist this year, I believe the Federal Reserve should continue to explore ways to promote more rapid economic growth," Bloomquist told a business group in Hartford, Connecticut.

Dudley, Bloomquist and, to some degree, Duke are considered part of the Fed's "dovish" wing—more concerned with strengthening the economy than trying to contain inflation.

Their speeches could set the tone for the central bank's more activist members this year.

Dudley is head of the New York Fed, and Duke held permanent votes on the central bank's policy-setting committee, Bloomquist will rotate onto the panel in 2013.

The Labor Department on Friday reported the biggest gain in nonfarm payrolls in three months and said the jobless rate dropped to a near three-year low of 8.5 percent.

Bloomquist said that while the job growth is better than had been seen recently, it is still not enough to ease the country's toll employment.

Duke on Friday said the Fed's current stance of monetary policy is appropriate, with considerable risks both up and down to her forecast of moderate growth.

Prices for US government debt rose Friday as the Fed officials' calls for further stimulus overshadowed the good news on the economy, while stock prices slipped. The dollar rose against the euro.

The Fed has bought $1.3 trillion in Treasury and housing-related debt as part of its so-called quantitative easing over the last three years, in response to the worst recession in decades. It has also slashed overnight interest rates to near zero.

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US regulator wants erring firms to admit wrongdoing

WASHINGTON—US securities regulators will no longer let companies settle civil cases without admitting or denying the charges if they have already admitted wrongdoing to parallel criminal cases.

The policy change, announced by Securities and Exchange Commission Enforcement Director Robert Khuzami on Friday, applies only in instances where a defendant has already admitted to violating criminal laws.

It comes just over a month after a federal judge in New York rejected a proposed $285 million settlement between the SEC and Citigroup, in part because the bank had not admitted to wrongdoing. However, in that case, no parallel criminal charges have been filed.

It termed "unnecessary" for the SEC to include its traditional "neither admit nor deny" approach if a defendant had already been criminally convicted of the same conduct, Khuzami said.

For years companies have admitted to a narrow set of facts in resolving a criminal case with the Justice Department, while neither admitting nor denying more colorful language in an SEC investigation.

In one of the most egregious examples, Howard Mashell pleaded guilty for his role in a multibillion-dollar fraud scheme in 2009, but neither admitted nor denied the allegations in a settlement with the SEC.

"It was ludicrous to say the defendant does not admit charges that he's already pled criminally guilty to," said John Coffee, a professor at Columbia Law School.

More recently, insurance brokerage firm admitted to accounting errors to resolve criminal bribery charges with the Justice Department last month, but neither admitted nor denied related allegations from the SEC.

The practical impact of the change could be limited.

Since defendants will not be required to admit to allegations beyond those in a criminal case, it could do little to help private litigants sue on similar grounds, a concern companies have long raised.

"It is a very small, marginal change," but it "does make them look more flexible," Coffee said.

In rejecting the Citigroup accord, US District Judge Jed Rakoff said the SEC's failure to require Citigroup to admit or deny its charges left him with no way to know whether the settlement was fair. Rakoff also called the $285 million payout "pocket change" for the third-largest US bank.

The Citigroup settlement was intended to resolve charges that the firm sold risky mortgage-linked securities in 2007 without telling investors that it was betting against the debt.

The SEC policy change comes after a review by senior enforcement staff that began last spring, Khuzami said, and is "similar in" to the Citigroup ruling.

Still, Annette Poulsen, a professor at Duke Law School, said the policy change appeared to be an attempt to calm critics over the force of its settlements.

"My take on things is, it is all about managing the press," said Amon Cox, a professor at Duke Law School. The agency "looked pretty bad" before Judge Rakoff the other day," he said.

The policy change could have some drawbacks, according to Bob Bruns, a partner at Gibson Dunn, who said it may drag out negotiations as it forces the parties to try to overlay criminal admissions to a broader civil complaint.

The two agencies have different mandates in approaching cases, so perfectly aligning the two could be difficult, Bruns said.

The SEC has fought back against criticism of its settlements on multiple fronts.

The agency publicly defended the settlement, SEC chair Mary Schapiro asked Congress to allow the SEC to impose larger monetary penalties.

The SEC has also appealed Rakoff's rejection of the settlement, saying in boosters he believes Rakoff erred "by announcing a new and unprecedented standard that is adversely harms investors by depriving them of substantial, certain and immediate benefits."

The SEC got two bites at the apple against Rakoff again last week, when he chastised the agency for keeping him out of the loop on its efforts to collect on the case.

When Rakoff issued a ruling approving any delay in the case last Tuesday the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals had granted a temporary stay 78 seconds earlier.

A motions panel on Jan. 17 will consider the SEC's bid for a longer delay as it appeals Rakoff's ruling.

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BUSINESS

Investors brace for European hit on US earnings

Financials reported to be hardest hit by euro zone fallout

NEW YORK—Investors are about to find out if the economic woes in Europe are going to deliver a deep wound to US companies' earnings instead of the mere scratch that many expect.

The fourth-quarter reporting period kicks off this week, and all eyes will be on retailers in order to gauge whether the debt crisis has propelled the region toward a recession. This could dent positive sentiment just as investors start to focus on strong US growth.

Analysts believe that less US stock market valuations already factor in weakness from Europe for the fourth quarter, but there are concerns that earnings forecasts for 2012 have yet to account for deeper fallout.

"There's some unbridled optimism that frolds somewhere the US can decouple from the rest of the world," said Shawn Hackett, president at Hackett Financial Advisors in Boynton Beach, Florida. "That is highly unlikely."

Companies, including tech heavyweights Intel Corporation and Hewlett Packard and others like insurer MetLife, have already cited fallout from Europe for reduced expectations.

Analysts' forecasts for fourth-and even first-quarter earnings have tumbled since the summer despite steady improvement in US economic demand.

While all 10 S&P 500 sectors have seen profit estimates cut, materials and financials have been the hardest hit. Other sectors that could get dragged down by Europe's problems include the industrial, consumer and technology sectors.

The overall S&P 500 forecast for fourth-quarter earnings growth has already been slashed, down to growth of 7.9 percent from 17.6 percent previously.

Some 16 percent of all Standard & Poor's 500 company sales come from Europe, which would have a very negative impact on earnings, said Hackett. S&P's earnings analyst likewise is bearish.

"In earnings, when you're talking about pennies beating it or not, 14 percent of the number makes a difference."

The euro zone debt crisis has engulfed much of the continent as major institutions have feared that nations exposed to debts in struggling nations such as Greece, Portugal, Italy and Spain.

The latter two are the third- and fourth-largest economies in the euro zone and are struggling to reduce debt through severe spending cuts and higher taxes.

These problems are affecting economic growth. Italy gave just 0.2 percent in the third quarter from the previous year.

Economists in a December Reuters poll forecast the euro zone will contract by 0.3 percent in the fourth quarter, followed by a further 0.2 percent contraction in January-March, before a meager recovery in subsequent quarters.

Global companies with more than 50 percent of their sales in Europe and with a market cap greater than $5 billion underperformed other major averages in 2011, according to Thomson Reuters data.

In a report on Thursday summarizing a number of industrial equipment companies, Morgan Stanley analysts pointed out that many executives were "cautiously optimistic" with expectations for a mild recession in Europe.

Companies in that industry are expecting 4-to-6-percent revenue growth in 2012, but Morgan Stanley said "short-term trends" suggest estimates could fall short of that if world growth slows.

Companies including Dover Corp and Illinois Tool Works would be hurt, they said. Dover component 300 would take the hit in a "deep recession" in Europe.

"If we're dealing with organic revenue growth, you're going to be seeing earnings decline," said Hackett. "In some cases, it could be very severe, and I do not believe the stock market has priced in what the likely reality is."

Reuters

BRITISH SCHOOLS GROUP (BSG) to set up Philippine Branch in KIDAPAWAN CITY - BSG, with other Filipino national investors, recently signed with Asiania Holdings Inc. (AHI) to build and establish its Manila branches/Asiania City, the company's flagship project. Currently, BSG has locations in Moscow, Tashkent, Pangkor, Marbella, Sao Paulo, Georgetown, Mendoza, Beijing and Kuala Lumpur. The Manila Branch is expected to be operational by September of 2012. Seated from left (top): Atty. Charles Nelson (QT), Atty. Paul Quintos (BSG), Francis Ignacio, Ramon Bruno - Development Director (BSG), Ruth Watanabe - Managing Director (BSG), Edwin Watanabe - Vice President (AHI).

AFP

Euro zone economic confidence still declining

BRUSSELS—Consumer and business confidence in the euro zone economy fell for the 10th month in a row in December, the European Commission said Friday in four of seventeen focused large euro Europe.

"The overall decline in the EU resulted from weakening confidence in services, construction," the commission said in its monthly survey.

Sentiment, however, improved in retail trade and remained broadly stable in industry, the European Union's executive arm added.

A mid- concern that Europe is heading towards recession, the Economic Sentiment Indicator (ESI) dropped by 0.5 points to 93.3 in the 17-nation euro zone and by 0.8 percent to 92 in the wider 27-nation European Union.

Among nations in the debt-laden euro zone, sentiment rebounded in Germany, rising one point to 105, and the Netherlands, where it rose by 0.8 points to 96.5.

It deteriorated in Italy falling 4.6 points to 85.5, and Spain, where it dropped 1.1 points to 89.5. The two countries are most in for restabilizing to cut spending and re- form them economies to stave off the debt crisis in the euro zone.

AFP

TRADERS work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange

AFP/FILE

Muted trade in US, Europe seen ahead

BARCLAYS Capital expects muted activity on Europeans and US exchanges in 2012 amid concerns of global political and economic uncertainties, and cut its price targets on Reuters operators NYSE Euronext Inc and CME Group Inc.

The brokerage downgraded its relative growth forecast on the CME, which operates the Chicago Board of Trade, and cut its price targets on NYSE to $36 from $38, citing concerns over the company's cash business and leverage to Europe.

However, Barclays analyst Roger Freeman said he expects a better trading environment in the second half of 2012 for US cash equities, predicated on progress with European debt discussions, potentially leading to increased investor confidence.

According to Thomson Reuters' financials data, Roger Freeman is a first-team analyst for the insurance of his earnings estimates in his coverage universe and a ranked first among 23 analysts for his coverage of NYSE Euronext.

Freeman also raised his price target on Sterling CME Group Inc to $34 from $32.

"While short spikes in volatility could be positive for trading volumes, we believe that for the time being a decline in volatility from current high levels would be healthy for capital markets," Freeman wrote in a note to clients.

CME shares were down 1 percent at $251.46 on the Nasdaq, while NYSE shares were down 2 percent to $36.68.

Nasdaq OMX was down marginally at $24.80 on late Friday morning.

Reuters

Analysts say gold prices may hit new high in '12

LONDON—Precious metals analysts expect gold prices to rise for a 12th year in a row and to reach a record high in 2012, but see less optimism for silver and platinum, according to a survey by the London Bullion Market Association.

The LBMA's survey of 26 contributors showed all but 3 participants expected gold to hit an all-time high in 2012, with a majority of 19 of them forecasting gold to reach a high above $2,000 an ounce.

Analysts also forecast gold to average $1,786.00 an ounce this year, compared with an average of $1,572.80 in 2011, the survey showed.

The gold price rose to a record $1,920.30 an ounce in September and gained 14 percent in price over the 12 consecutive year of gains in 2011.

Ruth Crowell, LBMA chief executive director, said in a statement that participants expressed prices for all four metals to pick up from their current levels.

"However, if we compare the average 2012 forecasts with actual average prices in 2011, we can see that analysts are less bullish about the prospects for precious metals during the next 12 months," she said.

"While analysts predict a similar rise in the price of gold (12.3 percent) and for the price of palladium to remain broadly unchanged (up 0.3 percent), they are forecasting a fall in the price of both silver (-3.2 percent) and platinum (-3.6 percent)."

Most among investors over the dollars most of so-called 'safe-haven' assets as the debt ins. Investors in the bullet loans, together with the euro zone debt crisis and the bullish impact of ongoing central bank buying, were major drivers for gold.

Palladium is expected to gain modestly this year, however to average $705.52 an ounce in 2012, compared with an average price of $720.63.

The metal, mostly used in catalytic converters in gasoline-powered vehicles, is expected to see solid demand from emerging economy auto markets such as China, but risks disinvestment from exchange-traded funds backed to palladium and modest supply from Russia, the world's top metal stockpiles, UK refiner Johnson Matthey said in November 2011.

Silver is expected to struggle this year, according to the survey. Participants told the LBMA they expected silver to average $30.90 an ounce in 2012, compared with an average price of $35.11 last year.

According to the LBMA's survey, platinum has the least optimistic outlook in terms of price, which is expected to average $1,634.00 an ounce in 2012, compared with $1,720.00 in 2011.

The LBMA said it would publish the full results of its survey and comments from participants on its website in mid-January.

Reuters

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Argentine tango company to set Manila on 'Fire'

TANGO Fire dancers in "Flames of Desire" —KRISTINE ORMACHEA-ROJAS

Tango Fire Company of Buenos Aires performs at Resorts World Manila on Jan. 17-18 to raise funds for scholars of Ballet Philippines

By Elka Requicia
Contributor

TIENES GF is as traveling without moving while being generous and having yet another reason why "It's more fun in the Philippines" when you watch Tango Fire Company of Buenos Aires at the Newport Performing Arts Theater, Resorts World Manila on Jan. 17 and 18 at 8 p.m.

The presentation will raise funds for the benefit of dance scholars of Ballet Philippines (BP).

Margie Moran-Floirendo, BP president and Miss Universe 1973, chanced upon one of Argentina's best touring tango groups during its performances in London. She then arranged for 15 members of the group to perform here and help raise funds for the Yasmin Jurado Dance Scholarship Fund (named after BP's former dance school director who passed away last last year).

The show, "Tango Fire—Flames of Desire," will feature 18 dancers, a quartet of musicians, and one of Argentina's finest singers.

"I thought their UK performance was beautiful—so full of intensity and passion...that it might be a good idea to bring them here since Argentine tango has become increasingly popular even here in our country," said Moran-Floirendo, who has recently become a "tangera," or Argentine tango dance enthusiast, herself.

"For less than two hours, the Philippine audience will be able to experience first hand how homegrown this passionate kind of alluring music and dance is in the region of Latin America," she added.

Moran-Floirendo said that aside from the tango, the audience will also be treated to a "mini-fashion show" featuring the creations of Filipino designers Rajo Laurel, Cesar Galeno, Jeffrey Quiambao, Ivan Gonzalez, Ito Ocampo, Ivarluna, Mark Bumgarner, Ferdinand Cruz, Jojie Lloren

CTE stages Nora Ephron women's play

MEMORIU Luschengco-Pak

CATHY Asunar-Dy

'Next Fall,' Rep's first production for 2012, opens Jan. 13

AFTER PRODUCING over 900 plays and musicals through 74 seasons, Repertory Philippines ushers in 45th year this 2012 with its first production, "Next Fall."

Written by playwright Geoffrey Nauffts, "Next Fall" is a moving story of Luke and Adam, a gay couple spanning over differences in their religious faiths. The play portrays the ups and downs of the publicly couple's five-year relationship with many humor and conflicting issues.

"Next Fall" paints a beautiful and funny portrait of modern romance, setting the hard questions about commitment and faith. But ultimately, simply is a tale about the transformative power of love.

The play won the 2010 John Gassner Award for Geoffrey Nauffts. In the same year, the play won also nominated for the Drama Desk Awards for Outstanding Play, for the Tony Awards, for Best Play; and the Outer Critics Circle Awards, for Outstanding New Broadway Play.

The cast features Bart Guingona as Adam, a committed cynic, atheist and hypochondriac, while Daniel Blanco plays the role of Luke, Adam's boyfriend, a lost soul into Christian and aspiring actor. Gerard Salt from Michigan and Rita is the best bossy mix the lead theater scene.

Carol Feliciano enters the role of Holly, Adam's fag hag best friend and owner of the cutsie shop where both Adam and Luke work. Rounding Adam are plays Brandon, Luke's friend, a property manager; Luke (Jojo), he is both pot and a born-again Christian. Jane Hemedes plays Arlene, Luke's mother, a former wild child who has since settled on to sudden age of conservative. Miguel Maniscan is Butch, Luke's father and arlene's ex-husband, a deeply religious man.

Tribidan is for director An dre Gamosa directs the play.

"Next Fall" runs Jan. 13 - Feb. 5, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and matinee shows on Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30 p.m. All performances are at Onstage, Greenbelt 1, Makati.

The cast and creative team of "Next Fall" is led by Baby Barrello, artistic director; Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo, associate artistic director; John Batalla, lighting designer; and Denis Lay Jimbo, set designer.

Call Repertory Philippines at 5715020 or 5714942; e-mail info@repertoryphi. visit www.repertoryph. www.youtube.com/repertoryphils, Ang Huli sa Facebook. Call Ticketworld at 8916999; visit www.ticketworld.com.ph.

"Next Fall" is presented by special arrangement with Creative Artists Agency.

DO YOU remember...

Working in window dress during childhood birthday parties?

Finding embarrassed buying your very 1st bra?

Buying a pair of killer red heels to get your years on?

Walking down the aisle in Mom's wedding gown to be rakhi the groom you will leave, or cherish?

Each milestone in a woman's life is replaced with happiness, tears and the special piece of clothing she wears during those moments. A woman's clothes and accessories are not only expressions of her unique tastes and unending personality but are reflections of the moments in her define who she is today. Behind each of her lipstick, faded pair of jeans, cocktail dress, painful set of stilettos and designer handbag, she has a story to tell.

The sensational off-Broadway show "Love, Loss and What I Wore," written by Nora Ephron ("When Harry Met Sally..." "Sleepless in Seattle") and Delia Ephron ("The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants," "Hanging Up"), vividly recounts a collection of comic and heartwarming stories from different women who remember her own stories of their lives through the clothes they wore.

The show is based on the best-selling book by Irene Kirk, et-mail, and has featured notable actresses such as Jane Lynch ("Glee"), Rosie O'Donnell, Brooke Shields ("Blue Lagoon: The Awakening"), Emily Watson ("Gosford Park"), Rita Wilson, Nikki Blonsky ("Hairspray"), Alma Midel ("Culture Club"), Fran Drescher ("The Nanny"), Alicia Silverstone ("Clueless"), Annie Lynn Dugler ("The Important" and "Entourage"), to name just a few.

Since its debut in 2000 in New York's Riverside Theater, "Love, Loss and What I Wore" has never failed to garner praise from critics and delight audience members who see themselves, or someone they know in each funny and poignant tale. It has since been been staged in Los Angeles, Toronto, Buenos Aires, Mexico, Stockholm and Paris.

After the rave successful July 28-31 debut premiere in Manila of "Love, Loss and What I Wore," CTE Productions is proud to bring back the acclaimed off-Broadway hit, still with some of the best female talent in the scene today.

The Jurassic cast includes theatre luminary and Repertory Philippines veteran Gabi Ballade-Robinson, theatre and voice actress Pam Imperial-Escobar; and classical music and theater performer Joy Virata-Glorioso.

The show is directed by the same tandem behind the hit show "Defending The Caveman," Michael Williams and Dr.

"Love, Loss and What I Wore" will run on Jan. 20-22, at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, 4/F RGSC Plaza, Ayala Ave. corner Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati. Shows are at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday with Saturday and Sunday matinees at 3:30 p.m.

Tickets are at P1,200 for orchestra center, P1,000 for orchestra side and bags, P800 for balcony.

Call CTE Productions at 8814900, visit www.ticketworld.com.ph, 2161788 or 0917-5378815, e-mail cteshows@gmail.com.

JOY Virata-Glorioso, Lea Salonga and Gabi Ballade-Robinson

BITTEN: Escobar

Tanghalang Pilipino brings back four Virgin Labfest plays in 'Eyeball'

By Yusef G. De Jesus
Contributor

AS THE long-lish hooked out of its socket before a live audience may not be your usual theater fare to begin the year.

But true to its mission of developing young talents by including original Filipino plays in each theater season, Tanghalang Pilipino brings back possibly the most engaging original Filipino monologue for the stage in the past decade: "Eye Reservation: Sigaganito ang Buong," a one-act play by Layeta Buenaventura directed by Tuxqui Buenaventura.

The story of a successful young doctor who agrees to sue for money in his home town but has been troubled ever he decides to undisclosed politicians. "Eye Reservation" is among the four original one-act plays, collectively titled "Eyeball: New Visions in Philippine Theater," to be staged starting Jan. 13-Feb. 12 at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (Little Theater) of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Exploring the theme "Branching," the program also has Carlo Benedict Garcia's "Bukid Nida Nang Bagtasingo sa Philco-Obrapais," Ernel Molina Agulia's "Eliche" and Nick Pichay's "Isang Aclos sa Kamalig."

Urgent and timely

The four plays were chosen from more than a hundred works in the 8-year-old Virgin Labfest, the annual staging of original plays that happens every June-July at the CCP's Tanghalang Huseng Batute.

Gemino "Rahlf" Abad Nang Bagtasingo sa Philco-Obrapais" is directed by Rikki Benedicto, the series line actor who plays the ill-fated Dino Bonaventura.

Though Philco-Obrapais is a real place, in Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, Garcia's play tackles the interlocking lives of ordinary Pinoys who happen to converge at one point on their one 4000—workers, corrupt politicians, a gay fabik prostitute, the town "con artist," a nun and a mentor who manages to move after having flirted online for months and now decides to have an "eyeball."

The current spate of news reports about former generals and now highly-known Philippines, meanwhile, renders Agulia's "Eliche" even more urgent and timely, which is a story about forced disappearances and how a couple tries to deal with the loss of their daughter. Originally directed by Edna Vida during its Virgin Labfest run, it is now directed by Dexie Millado, with top-notch veterans actors Shirley Lanz, Ignatius Mendoza and JV Arcon. Company member Regina de Vera is the cast.

In the same vein, Pichay's "Isang Aclos sa Kamalig," also directed by Millado, is about two former lovers who share the common misfortune of having loved ones as victims of extra-judicial killings. The many sound like a serious play on doomed lovers, but Pichay's mastery of witty but insightful dialogue makes the importance quite the opposite for the audience. It is just fun right to have this play as the final salvo among the four.

"Eyeball" will be shown as two sets of twin bills: Set A has "Eliche" and "Eye Reservation," while Set B has "Malisa" and "Kamalig."

Call 832-3661, 8832-0321/31, 0922-3519645, CCP Box Office at 8321761 or Ticketworld at 8916999.

Benefits and protection for artists

By Walter Ang
Contributor

ARTISTS USUALLY are not practical or business-minded. They don't invest their money—most of the time they don't have much money anyway—or have wealth or any kind of insurance," says actor Fernando "Nanding" Josef, artistic director of Tanghalang Pilipino.

Josef is advocating not just to theatre artists, but also painters, sculptors, television and film actors, voice talents, production and backstage staff, dancers, composers, playwrights, choreographers, costume and fashion designers, photographers. Basically, people working in creative fields who are "self-employed" or "freelancers."

Fortunately there are now growing options for them on availing certain government-owned benefits and other safeguards against unexpected events. There are also groups that can join that can assist them with these kinds of needs.

Life Basics

Luigi Bicanes, artistic director of BAG Art Philippines, lost an eyesight when a fallen stone tree hospitalized. His friend had an Social Security System and Philhealth benefits and was left with a large bill to pay off.

Bicanes founded Life Basics Network of Solutions Company to "assist professionals who don't have time to pursue city apply for or update contributions for their income tax returns. Social Security Services, Philhealth (government health insurance), Pag-Ibig (home financing program, officially known as the Home Development Mutual Fund), and Community Tax Certificate (most commonly known as cedula).

The company does all the tedious legwork of researching the five basic governmental duties for a P300 monthly fee.

"You'd spend the same amount, maybe more, for transportation and other expenses like photocopying and mail documents if you had to do it all by yourself."

Life Basics accepts all kinds of clients including non-theatre professionals. "OFWs, full-time vloggers, nurses can avail of our services."

Call 7942610, 0915-2478609 or 0905-4358555, email lifebasics@yahoo.com.ph.

Insurance

Aside from being artists, Buddy Caveman, a senior member of Philippine Ethnomusical Theatre Association, and Glenn Dolina, a freelance artist for music and TV, have both been advocating "financial planning" to their fellow artists. Both are financial advisers of Bluemlife, a company that offers insurance, pre-need plans, pension plans.

Dolina says: "Artists usually must be assured to use his free days ("while waiting for shows or things.") proactively. "For more than just an additional source of income for us, I realized I could now educate people on financial planning. In the talk, like in a show, I can entertain while also providing information."

"I strongly encourage artists to get insured, from whatever insurance agency they feel most comfortable with," adds Caveman. "One thing unique about what we do in Bluemlife is that we available Del people's priorities or needs and we come up with solutions and present them accordingly, whether they need a financial vehicle for education, health, retirement, investment and bank accumulation, estate planning, income protection, or all of the above."

Both are not exclusive to theatre clients. "But my primary goal is to help fellow artists source a financial plan to cater for health, retirement or investment or even for the education of their child," says Dolina.

AWPI

The Artists' Welfare Project Inc. (AWPI) is an organization that provides financial, legal, and medical and hospitalization benefits to Filipino artists (theatre) or otherwise) who may be disabled or incapacitated by reason of age or physical or mental infirmity.

"Beyond meeting emergency needs, AWPI also hopes to assist artists achieve security in terms of having a place to live, providing education for their children, and having funds for their retirement," says Josef, AWPI founder and president.

"But, more support and help our artists, especially during lean times of need," Rosalind in 2008, the group is working towards becoming a foundation. "We can then apply for tax-exempt status so that donors can contribute tax-free."

The group has had fundraising activities in the past few years. It plans to collaborate with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, to host a national conference on artists' welfare in summer of 2013.

The Outreach Division of the Cultural Center of the Philippines is assisting in coordinating with regional groups to put up AWPI branches nationwide.

Membership and annual membership dues apply. Call 8321120 loc 3020 or [illegible]

TAG

Newly formed Philippine Theatre Actors Guild (TAG) is specifically by actors. Wrestler and president Bobby Aguilos, freelance theatre actress and executive director Jaime Del Mundo are the group for the past few months and finally convened the group's first First General Assembly and election of officers in early October.

"TAG is an association that protects and upholds the rights of professional theatre actors," said Del Mundo. "We want to work towards getting actor's production sentimentals law."

"Among other goals, we aim to provide our members protection of their basic rights on artistic engagement; both locally and abroad, and assisting with their needs like legal obligations provided by the Philippine government such as health, security and taxes."

Filipino actors have only one theatre guild grouping together and helping one another. Aguilos is already in touch with Aktor Pilipino Inc. (Aktor) and Actors Tribe, while Josef is in communication with Aguilos on how AWPI and TAG can possibly work together on "the same goals and objectives for the Filipino talent."

Membership and annual membership dues apply. E-mail [illegible]

JUDE Law and Robert Downey Jr. reprise their roles as Watson and Holmes, respectively.

FROM BOOK TO FILM

New 'Sherlock Holmes' film pays tribute to Arthur Conan Doyle

By Jay Gonzales
Correspondent

"CASE RECONVENED." These two tantalizing words at the close of 2009's "Sherlock Holmes" promised audiences that more adventures lie ahead. Now Warner Bros.' "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows" fulfills that promise, bringing the legendary detective back to the big screen in a new action-packed mystery that celebrates the genius of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes.

The 2009 "Sherlock Holmes" movie, directed by Guy Ritchie, had redefined Doyle's iconic character for a new generation, with Robert Downey Jr. exuding his own unique incarnation of the role, alongside Jude Law as Holmes' friend, partner, and occasional foil, Dr. John Watson.

Indeed, the similar characters had defied convention. Gone were the once-emblematic deerstalker hat, curved pipe and penlike British demeanor, replaced by a streetwise, bare-knuckled brawler whose physical prowess was equal to his superlative mind and supernatural powers of perception.

Ritchie says, "One of the important things about the first movie was to get away from the somewhat dated, if you will, impression of the character that I think many people were expecting. In keeping with Conan Doyle's original creation, we wanted to restore the physicality of Holmes while conveying his intelligence and wit, and Robert brought all that and more to the equation. There were a lot of little nuances going on that added so much to the role. I find it impossible now to imagine anyone else as Sherlock Holmes."

Downey reciprocates, "I love working with Guy. It's such a collaborative process and he has a terrific sense of humor that, in my current line of work, you don't get to play here. On this film, there was an element of rediscovering Sherlock Holmes all over again. We wanted to maintain that sense of fun

SCENE from "Sherlock Holmes" 2: Guy Ritchie returns to director

but with even more gravitas."

"Robert knew how to get inside Sherlock Holmes' head to make him funny and eccentric and yet absolutely believable as the most renowned detective of all time. It was fantastic to watch," producer Joel Silver remarks.

"First and foremost," Downey adds, "we wanted to maintain the visceral tone that was part of Guy's original vision, while presenting Holmes with an even more difficult case, one that would challenge his considerable skills."

That challenge comes out of the chute. Irene Adler, a redoubtable adversary, one whose name is familiar to anyone with even a passing knowledge of the Sherlock Holmes canon, professor James Moriarty

Criminal genius

Professor Lionel Wigram announces, "Moriarty is the greatest criminal mastermind in the world. He is a genius all, but a mad genius that because he is as brilliant, Holmes may have met his match."

Ritchie emphasizes, "Because they are intellectual equals in a degree, there is the sense that this is a game that is stimulating to their both. In this way, they actually need each other, and that idea is our theme in the books. Holmes needs Moriarty as much as Moriarty needs Holmes."

As the nemesis of Moriarty's conspiracy unfolds, it broadens the scope of the action beyond the confines of London, to Paris, Germany and on to Switzerland. Ritchie affirms, "Our narrative enabled us to spread our wings across Europe, to expand the topography and tapestry of the story."

Wigram says, "It also allowed us to add a different flavor to the fact that cherished early 20th century rivalries, economically and especially in terms of chemistry. It was the beginning of the modern age, where we see the seeds of the military-industrial complex, with bigger and more powerful weapons and more efficient warfare."

With a changing world on the brink, Holmes is deeper afoot. For someone who knows how to stir the pot, however, there is also tremendous opportunity to grasp untold wealth and power. Only Sherlock Holmes has deduced that professor James Moriarty is the one making the fire, and it is only a matter of time before everything boils over.

"Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows" is now showing.

JARED Harris as Moriarty; Noomi Rapace as Madame Simza Heron

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This Promo is Available Nationwide from January 7- 31, 2012.

LG Customer Information Center

2011's amazing senior citizens in the performing arts

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

GRACE I turned 65 last Dec. 30; I thought that my son-under-10 what passes for it) should pay tribute to those amazing senior citizens in the arts.

Just before the year closed, I learned that filmmaker and opera director Franco Zeffirelli danced his latest "Turandot" in—of all places—the Middle East. The new sparkling venue is the Oman Opera House right in Muscat, capitalized by oil-rich nation in the Unit ed Arab Emirates.

So, what's the big deal?

Nothing, really, except for the jolting discovery that Zeffirelli is now 88 years old. Opera production is not for the faint-hearted, and if you are 88, you will need the energy and stamina of a 25-year-old to survive an opera director. But, lo and behold, if Zeffirelli is directing a grand opera as a spry 88 age and getting great reviews in CNN as though his latest production was a teen walk in the park.

I relate with this film and opera director because I saw his "Rodelinda" (Handel's) when I was in college and loved it. In spite of, my good friend, Stefania diva Kelly Monteleon appeared in at least three Franco Zeffirelli productions at the Met and Covent Garden. Just three years short of senior citizen, Lo Monaco just sang "Tosca" at the Covent Garden and told reporters, "What's wrong with singing 'Tosca' at 57? Opera lives Magda Olivero did just that at age 97."

Placido, Chastel

In the Oman production is the eminent conductor-singer—another se-

FRANCO Zeffirelli (below) directed "Turandot" in the new Royal Opera House in Oman in the Middle East at age 88.

nior citizen in his late 60s...none other than Placido Domingo! A few months back, he was doing a baritone role to tape in a Covent Garden production of "Otello." Alfredo Domingo's gave it the first nod early February. Dolin, Daniel Gamaga, who just sang King Herod in "Salome" in Austria.

Gamaga was Domingo's understudy in the Washington Opera production of "The Merry Widow" opposite another senior senior citizen, the diva Mirella Freni. In whose Italian master class star ever Rachelle Gordian had attended.

I saw Russia's legend of dance, Maya Plisetskaya at the CCP in the early '90s when she was just 66. Last November, I just learned that the great Maya just danced in Ashton with a special Mariinsky Ballet work called "Ave Maya," and she was in love and 80! Is it legends are either dead or dying at her age, and here she is dancing in 2011 and getting more fans in her mid-80s!

While I have worked with mostly young winners of the National Music Competition for Young Artists, from pianist Sonrena Arriola to cellist Victor Michael Goo, I have also worked with the veterans (no single or double quotes there).

Santamaria, Reyes

I am referring to the Romantic Piano Concerto team of pianists Rudolf Santamaria (now 72) and Reynaldo Reyes (in his mid-70s or more). How do they differ from their junior editions?

Reyes, for one, had logged countless evenings of all-Rachmaninov and all-Bartok programs with the energy of someone in the early 20s!

For the record, Santamaria and Reyes have logged more than 600 concerts nationwide since 2001 from Aparri to Davao, and had interpreted more than three orchestras (a la the old Manila Symphony playing three concertos each) more than 900 times in different places, and you can say what they went through. It's like doing a Pavarotian workout without the benefit of a spry pre-workout.

Cecile Licad and other pianists do only one concerto (or two engagements like did three concertos with PPO—three called the CCP Philharmonic—when she was 14, and that was in 1975 at the CCP).

But another senior citizen by the name of Dr. Raul Isaias Goco CCP Chairman and UST Conservatory of Music dean) did five Rachmaninoff concertos in one evening and my friends still with family good aplomb.

Look at Pitarobers, Zeffirelli, Domingo and Gamaga on one hand, and Santamaria and Reyes on our senior unit.

We have heard of triple schools planning to offer their senior citizens for one reason or another. Let me just remind these that brilliant artists in the League of Cecile Licad, Joseph Estrella and Victor Michael Goo learned a lot from dedicated teachers in their senior years. Dame Ruth Gale, pianist teachers with athletic hair figures.

(With apologies to teachers below 60!)

FOSTER of "Symphony of My Dreams," a musical based on life and times of entertainment icon George Tang opening at Meralco Theater tomorrow

NBDB now accepts nominations to children's book award

THE NATIONAL Book Development Board (NBDB) is now accepting nominations to the 2nd National Children's Book Award.

On July 2012, the NBDB and the Philippine Board on Books for the Young (PBBY) will announce the 2nd National Children's Book Award, giving honor to the 10 best books for children and young adults published during the years 2010 and 2011.

All publishers, authors and illustrators are invited to submit their nominations. Deadline for submission is on or before 31 July 2012. Get the full copy of the rules and regulations and download the nomination form, visit NBDB (www.nbdb.gov.ph) and PBBY (www.pbby.org.ph) websites.

During the 1st National Children's Book Awards held in 2010, six books were awarded in the two broad categories. "Can We Live on Mars" (Adarna House), written by Grilyn Rocelo-Donaire and illustrated by Bev Lin-Dath, Lab-Dab" (Anvilcraft), written by Israeli Mallari and illustrated by Jomike Tejido; "Hatu-Tupuan" (Philippine Books), written and illustrated by Jomike Tejido; and "Ani Ako Eh" (Adarna House), written by Becky Bravo and illustrated by Jason Mora.

MARGIE Moran Floirendo

Argentine tango company to set Manila on 'Fire'

From page C1

pieces outside Argentina, including Paris.

In 2009, it was inscribed into the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage List that required Argentinians to study the form as only an undergraduate.

The dance is entirely different from the usual tango we would see in dance sport competitions or films like "Strictly Tango" and "Chicago."

Attorney, tax entrepreneur Nina Columna-Halley, who is Board Trustee of the Philippine Argentine Tango Association that is collaborating with BF for the event, the dance is defined by a close-to-chest embrace (as opposed to the usual tango where partners are closer to each other at the hip) and a certain kind of walk that is as fundamental to Argentine tango as plié is to ballet.

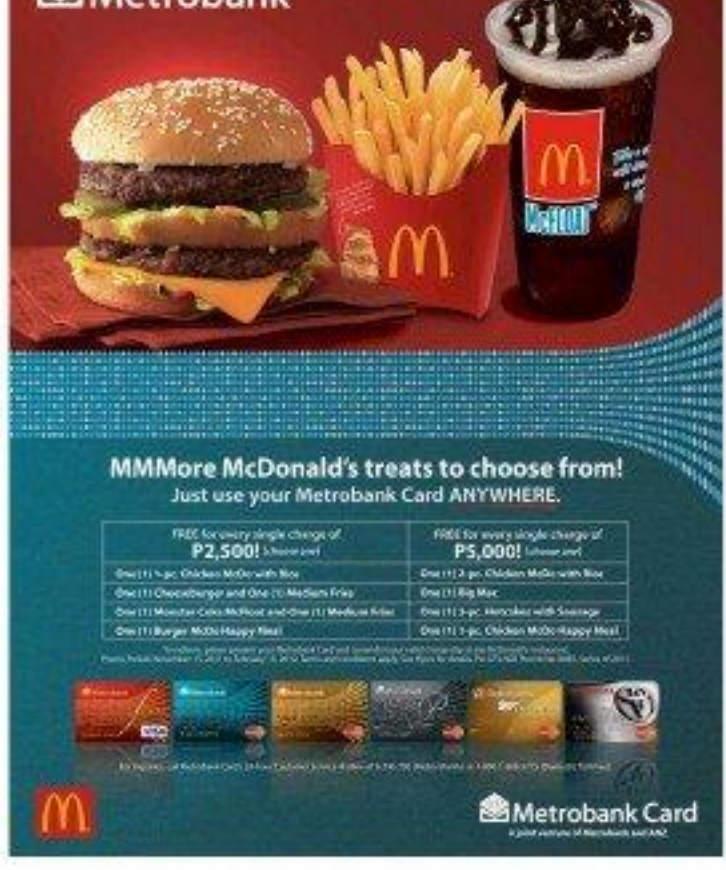
"No doubt, coming from Latin America, it is a very macho dance with very good-looking dancers," Columna-Halley said. "Perhaps the common denominator to the women—and secondly, but there is a deeper understanding to the dance and the way you move, the connection, internal energy and discipline you must muster to control your movements. I would totally dance with my eyes closed."

"It is also a significant reflection of total life as a deeper level—about how the men would lead and make sure you look beautiful because (), as Cara, makes him very beautiful, too."

Teach the how to Dougie? Not this time. Take me to "Tango Fire!" That's more like it.

Tickets start at P1,000. Contact Telepunkt at 8431000 or Ballet Philippines at 5511860. Check out their video on www.youtube.com/balletphilippines.

E-mail the author at tariman.ss@gmail.com.



LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Grand entrances

ALICE SLID down a rabbit hole into Wonderland, into a long hallway with doors of different sizes which led her to amazing adventures in the Lewis Carroll book.

In Alice's case, doors didn't get her to where she thought she was going. Some were too big that she couldn't reach the keyhole or she had to shrink herself to fit in the others.

The doors we go through each day may not feel as if they evoke the same drama as Alice's, but they do constitute us from here to there and just us from where we are to

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

where we are headed.

Countless times each day we open doors to get us through to the other side of where we are going. It's such a routine thing to do that we don't think there is anything special happening, but there is.

Entering a church, for example, is a special experience. High, solid doors open from the brightness and noise of the street into a serene, dim, quiet world in which a lofty ceiling dwarfs pilgrims.

The same kind of transition happens when entering a government building. Behind a columned portico stands a set of massive, forbidding doors that lead to an impressive marble-clad foyer that elicits awe (or is it submissiveness?) upon entering a building where power resides.

The older government buildings took heavy architectural pains. Think of entering the Manila Post Office, or the Manila

GRAND 2A

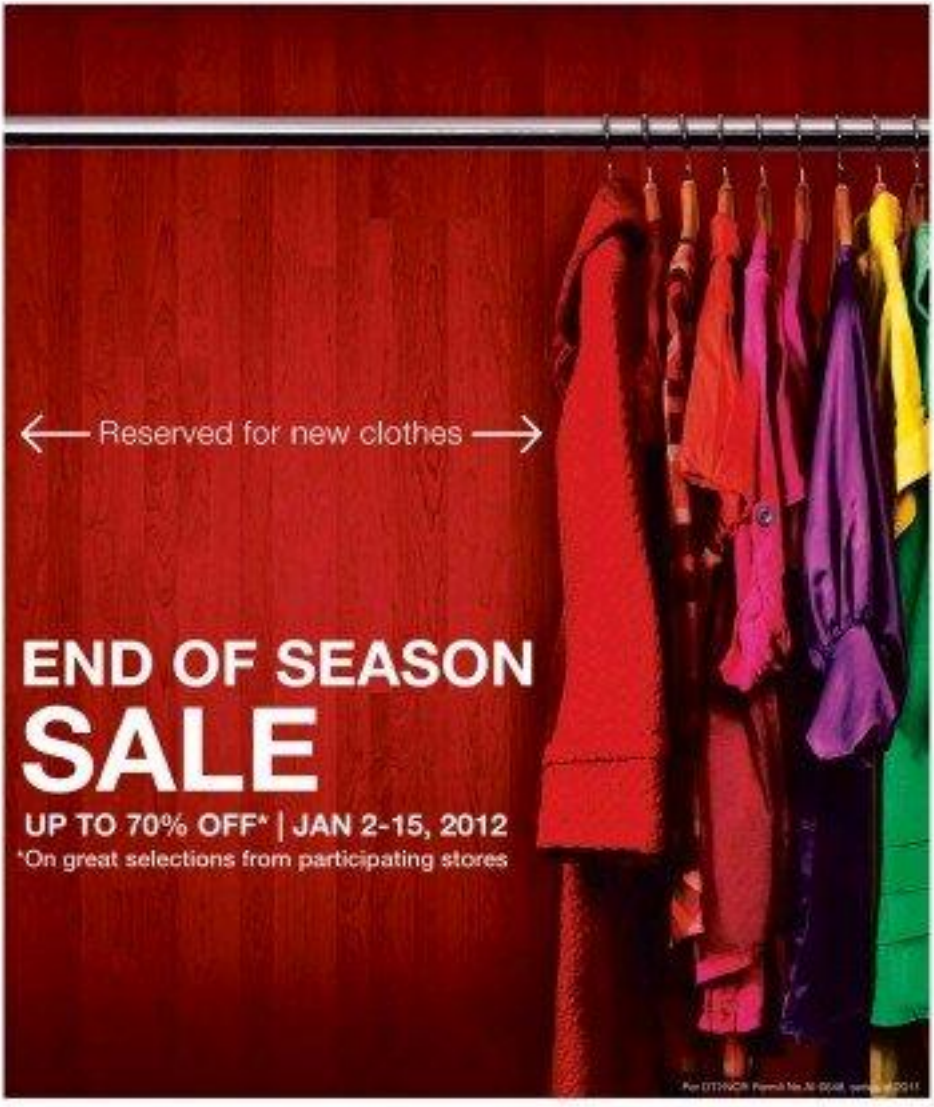
Homecoming for World War II guerrilla's descendants

By Benito Legarda Jr.
Contributor

UNDER HARSH Soviet Dictator of the National Historical Commission received last 26th, is the descendants of a man who, although of mixed nationality, freely chose to take part in the Philippine fight for freedom against the occupying Japanese.

He was Norbert Schmelkes, a Czech enlisted in stock and commodity trading in prewar Manila. He was married to a Mestizo lady, Lydia del Valle, and their daughter Corina was born in Manila. But with war clouds darkening the inter-national horizon, he decided it prudent to send

HOMECOMING 2C



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GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN

PUGAD BABOY — BY PAL LINOG

DICK TRACY — BY JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS

LOVE NOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

RED MACHINE — BY TRAVIS ABREA

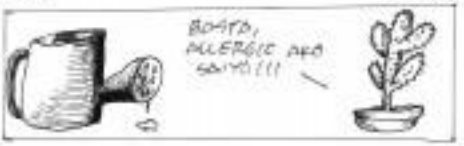
BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

HUTTE — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN — BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF MAHER

TAGBOK — BY MARA COLL



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCOISE DYSAO

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) People notice you more, which is why you might want to demand the spotlight when dealing with performance or family members. Someone older might try to discourage you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Good operations if you can do them discreetly. Don't let your guard down. Don't flip the operational switch too fast and suddenly be in control. It's confusing.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You feel the old financial pressure to make more. There's more to enough income. Nothing is set in stone, then soon, you can benefit from the generosity of others.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Refine how your impulses to criticize affect others. The problems with people and their attitudes might trigger this. It's time to use maintain your cool to keep the peace.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Feelings of self-doubt or self-pity cannot weigh heavy on your being. Don't entrust logical, but emotional decisions to someone who is not in touch with your feelings. Be sure you're not the one who is out of touch.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Someone older or in a similar role might be in control of your duties. Don't show more strength. What you want to do right now is move fast, avoid others and get your work done. Be efficient. You can!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Don't feel comfortable with partners in figures, especially over matters. It will not go well. Instead, you can be friendly, maintain professional boundaries and keep your distance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Travel plans can be delayed or cancelled. Any problems about conflict, inflation and social issues might get heavy-handed. Avoid them. Instead, enjoy your time, especially guests.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Don't expect much personally from others today, because everyone is fulfilled. Don't worry about this. The situation can very well, and you can make up your own excitement to take care of yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Discussions with partners or business might be a disaster. Don't even go there. Instead, explore completely different areas. Work on your own, especially organizing, completing, creative projects and the like.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Conversations at work might be off on today. You need the info you need another form to your head. Don't let it get you down. Actually, group meetings will benefit you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Someone is a bit moody today. There is no mistake and there isn't the time to confirm. Be extra patient and agree with children today.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

All the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	9	5	3	4	8	6	1	7
3	6	7	5	9	1	4	8	2
1	4	8	2	6	7	5	9	3
9	1	4	8	5	2	7	3	6
6	8	2	7	3	9	1	4	5
5	7	3	4	1	6	8	2	9
8	5	9	6	7	4	3	1	2
4	2	6	1	8	3	9	5	7
7	3	1	9	2	5	8	6	4

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

6			4	5				7
		3		1	7	5		
	7		6				2	
	2			7		9		5
3	4						7	6
9		7		4			3	
	3				8		9	
		8	2	9		7		
4				3	5			8

Difficulty Level ★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Accomplishment
5 Mission impact's title
10 Mission impact's title character, initially
14 Lacking drunkenness
15 City on the Ohio River
16 Hawk
17 Long-running TV series
19 Kitchen gadget
20 Plymouth rotary
21 Hurricane
22 Hurricane-ready
23 Hurricane-ready walk
25 Green onions found in tex-mex cuisine
26 Tex-mex cuisine
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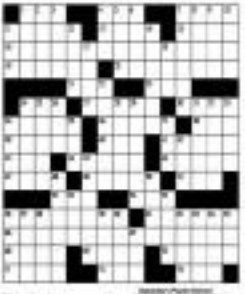


FAÇADE of the UST Main Building, declared a National Historical Treasure by the National Museum

Mammoth 400-photo exhibit documents 400th year of UST

By Lenor G. Bolden
Contributor

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas will mount a mammoth photo exhibit starting Jan. 30 showcasing 400 pictures depicting various events related to the 400th anniversary of Asia's oldest university.

The exhibit will be held at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences Gallery and the lobby of the UST Main Building, declared a National Landmark by the National Museum.

The event is part of the jampacked activities scheduled for this month as UST is set to welcome its fifth century after a yearslong celebration of its 400th founding anniversary, which started last year.

The 400 photos to be featured in the exhibit include the chronicles of the Quadricentennial activities, never-before-seen shots of the UST Main Building—which has been declared a National Historical Treasure by the National Museum—and the Dominican academic life at large.

The exhibit is curated by Commissioner Regalado Trota Jose of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. He is also UST archivist and a faculty member of the Cultural Heritage Studies program of the UST Graduate School.

Exhibit visitors will also have a chance to buy limited copies of some of the photographs. Part of the proceeds will be donated to the victims of typhoon "Sendong" as well as to UST-supported Ayta communities in Subic.

The photos are all purchased by UST architecture student Paul Alfonso Quintanilla, who has been appointed by UST Rector Rene Magnilibus Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP, as the official photographer for the quadricentennial celebrations. Quintanilla, who joined the Art Decour Hall of Fame in 2009, is also the former chief photographer of the Varsitarian, UST's official student paper.

ONE of the statues by the late Italian sculptor and UST Fine Arts professor Francesco Monti atop the UST Main Building

Homecoming . . .

From page D1

his wife, with their 10-month old daughter, back to the home country, in what would turn out to be a long separation.

The present visit is a much delayed homecoming for Gonzalez.

In Gabaldon's community reading, he was a member of the Philippine Commonwealth Government's National Produce Exchange, of which Benigno S. Aquino III was chairman.

Ambushes was one of 24 Czechoslowaks who, after the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific, volunteered as civilian employees in the motor transport division of the US army, a **marker at Capas Memorial** shrine honors half of that number who died in captivity. The other half survived, and Schmelkes escaped during the March.

He was unshaven and dirty and did not look European, and so was able to slide into a civilian column and, later, with four others, bought a banca and paddled to the Pasay shore near the house of the legendary Commander Charles "Chick" Parsons.

Schmelkes had lost 90 pounds in weight during the campaign from malaria and cardia. He spent much of 1942 recuperating while a country man gathered papers to attest to his several citizenships.

But he felt the need to do something, in this case, to protect guerrilla morale by publishing and reproducing (probably by hectograph) resistance news reports drawn from **short-wave international** broadcasts. In these activities, he developed a deep respect for the courage of his Filipino co-workers, without whom he could have accomplished little.

This was done under the aegis of Edwin Ramsey's guerrilla group. When it was known that American submarines were sending arms and supplies to Mindanao, he was sent there to promote supplies for Ramsey, leaving Manila on Feb. 15, 1944, and arriving in Mindanao on March 14. After he left Manila, his unit was broken up, he became a wanted man and stayed on with Ramsey's guerrilla signaling.

He was assigned to run the **radioing office and, after** several moves in response to Japanese counter guerrilla operations, he wound up in Dipolog. With Americans being evacuated by submarine, he also asked to be evacuated, but was refused for not being an American citizen. This he strongly contested, and wrote Parsons to that effect.

But he continued his work, and showed American airmen rescued by guerrillas near his station were adrift naught to his heedless in the DX about him.

With liberation in full swing, he applied for repatriation in February 1945, was flown to Leyte and then to Manila in April, and, in May, received his emoluments arrears, leaving on June 1, landing two days later in the US, and then going straight to his family in Mexico, where he later became general manager of Ford Bras.

Fifteen he died and was laid in state, the Philippine flag was draped on his coffin.

Gomez's present homecoming visit is a reminder to us Filipinos of men like Norbert Schmelkes who, although he did not have to, voluntarily joined us in our struggle for liberty.

> Although he was of neutral nationality, Czech Norbert Schmelkes joined the Filipinos in fighting the Japanese

Weaving history and culture in 'Palaspas'

By Glory C. Dimillo
Contributor

FOR MOST of us, palaspas is an ordinary adornment made of palm fronds used during Palm Sunday, but what we do not know is that such an ordinary adornment is an intricate weaving of a map of life, an indigenous aesthetics and even a philosophy. Elmer Nacheneda, in his book "Palaspas: An Appreciation of Palm Leaf Art in the Philippines," tells about palaspas that has figured in our trusty history and culture, in various religious, social and economic practices all over the country.

Nacheneda's fascination with palaspas started with a palm leaf half given to him by his father when he was four years old. From there on, his curiosity has grown into a passion, collecting different kinds of palaspas and learning from the artists and folks how to make them. He noted, for instance, that a rectangular pouch made of palm frond is called **pusit** in San Carlos, Pangasinan, as well as in Mt. Province and Santiago, Isabela. He noted how **dating palaspas** were used as amulets, or lange nuts, to hold **bulling sagawasan** pairs.

In Lingayen, he was taught by a 7 year-old girl to make **palapit** earrings.

"I was prepared to learn from one but she readily discussed me three kinds," said Nacheneda. "With nuts and dexterous fingers, she made the basic pouch using four strips, then a more intricate one using eight strips and, finally, a binary bundle of sixteen strips like was most precious when I repeatedly asked her to stop weaving at a certain point, untaxed the folds and repeat the step as slowly as possible."

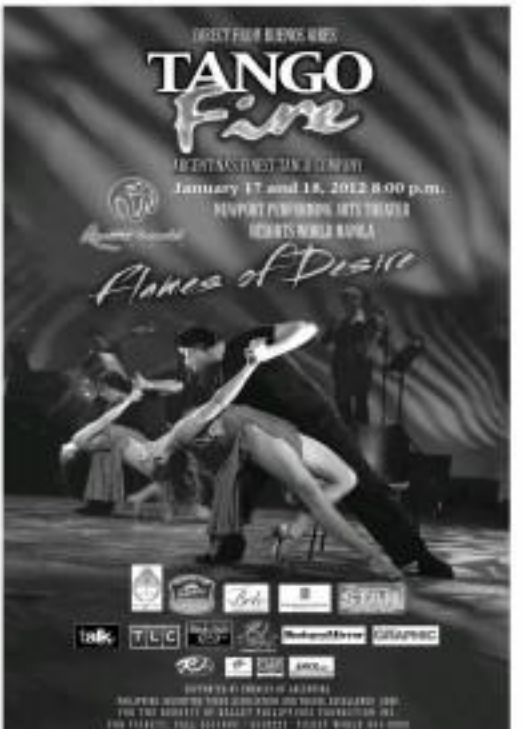
The achievement Nacheneda experienced while learning how to make pusit had translated into his own patience and perseverance as he traveled and documented palaspas' forms that eventually became 32 thick albums of pictures, pencil illustrations and notes from interviews and close-to-life palm leaf objects.

This richly photographed book is always not only a documentation of the history of palaspas but also a manual on how to do the various weavings, foldings and cuts to make decorations. Nacheneda's book is not just an appreciation of palm leaf art forms per se, as a manual, it tries to relate, contemporize and appropriate this forgotten practice. As a cultural lesson, the book looks into various ethnographic and historical references like the Vocabulario de la Lengua Bisaya, Relaciones, and the works of Fernando Alcina, Vidal Garcia, Ignacio Mercado, Robert Lane and Isidore Farkas.

Fr. Jose Arcellana commented in the foreword that the palm leaf is quintessentially a Southeast Asian folk and popular art form. Arcellana believes that whatever homo-originated and born there were transferred and diffused to nations far from cradles, but for him, Nacheneda's thorough research, a catalogue raisonné almost of Philippine forms, has laid out a map of a landscape that begs to be explored.

"Palaspas" is a winner of National Book Award 2009 and the Emerging Artist award from Cardinal Sin Catholic Book Awards 2008. It is published by Nacheneda Manila Geosociety Press.

For inquiries, call the Ateneo Press at 426-5494, e-mail ateneopress@admu.edu.ph.



Arts Festival 2012 celebrates Philippine architecture

THE NATIONAL Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) will hold Architecture Week 2012, one of the flagship projects for the Philippine Arts Festival-National Arts Month.

The event will feature exhibitions, design competitions, a conference and a lecture series that will explore the many facets of architecture and the production of space in Philippine life.

Architect Gabriel T. Lico, head of the NCCA National Committee for Architecture, said the activities will showcase that architecture is a "transdisciplinary lens." "It is at once both topic and tool—it can be subjective and objective, effort and sensibility," he explained.

Activities of Arch [open/text] 2012 include "Inhabitants[, Singles, Silos, Ship: a History of Chaos in the Philippines," a visual exhibition on the evolution of chaos; "La Isla Verde: the Landscape Architecture of National Artist IP Santos," an exhibition that will trace the professional career, iconic works and aesthetic principle of National Artist Ildefonso P. Santos Jr.; the history of Modern Philippine Landscape Architecture in "Inevitable Modernity: A Dictionary of Style," an exhibition on the architectural modes present during the Marcos regime; "Lolos: Architecture of Luxury and Guilty Pleasures," an exhibition on how architects, interior designers, and landscapers create sensual and luxurious environments in pursuit of hedonistic luxury;

"Nido: Elements of Philippine Architectural Styles," a kinetology exhibition on the various historical styles that have prevailed in the country; SCALE 1:1, a National Competition on Architectural Research and Education; Silver: chinaware; Speculate/Retake: Interiors Design Competition on Architectural Innovation; a design competition and exhibition that inspires less architecture students.

The premier showing and launch of "Luzon, Dhevmakhi-ng in the Philippines," a three-episode video documentary that looks at the evolution of the performing cinema design and landscape architecture in the Philippines; the Bestselling Filmmakers on architectural design and literature; robotic stuff; discuss current issues on architecture; and Ani ng Galing Locals Series on visual arts, sculpture, architecture, interior design, printmaking, fashion and textiles. Selected architecture and industrial partners and culture into the built environment.

PAF is held every February in celebration of National Arts Month, pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 683 signed in 1991. The month-long festival is spearheaded by the NCCA, led by its chairperson Felipe de Leon Jr. and OIC-executive director Adelaida Enriquez.

For more monthly celebration, the NCCA has taken the theme "Tradisyon at Inobasyon" (Tradition and Innovation).

For more information, contact PAF media director and NCCA Public Affairs and Information Office head Rene Estrada Raquiza at 527-2192 or 0920-5096557, or PAF festival manager Roxanne Nicolas at 0920-5096412. Log on to www.ncca.gov.ph; e-mail ncca.gov@gmail.com.

BALINESE believe that upon space must be maintained above human heads, therefore the portals at their temple above. At right, access to Pura Luhur Uluwatu in Bali is through a small, heavy wooden door.

Grand entrances

From page D3

tional Museum or Department of Tourism, the twin buildings of Ayala Museum and the Tell Museum sits at Buendia Park.

Awe and grandeur

The main National Museum building on Padre Burgos Drive commands awe and grandeur the moment you step into its lobby. The minimum portico has the sturdiness and magnificence you would expect of a grand residence.

But of going to the theatre is making a grand entrance, whether it be to the old Philippine Metropolitan Theater in Manila or the not-so-old Philippine Cultural Center of the Philippines. Erected in the grand entrance is the set of striking, of sighting from your car and gliding through the doors held open by a liveried doorman. On the inside, stairs sweep upward beneath vaulting chandeliers. It's drama of the best kind.

Drama of another kind is sweeping through the entrance of an upmarket mall. The kind with those doors that open all by themselves. "Automatic doors" that everyone wants but cannot have.

There one moves from the bright sunlight into an even brighter lobby lit to brilliance by light. Glass panels bounce reflection everywhere but the focus is on the shop windows where the objects of desire await.

In churches and older governmental buildings, the architecture holds many steps. On the other hand, in the contemporary mall, true to its function, it is the merchandise and shoppers who make entrances.

Either one uphill as well as suppress, as a hole in the wall conducive to a person who enters into a dark, depressing place. The spirit of many malls will have; there are holes in rooftop malls that open into grand entrance spaces and truly many courtyards.

An experience etched in my memory is entering a small provincial jail, walking through a short, dark tunnel that led from the outside to the inside where inmates were behind bars to talk to and the perimeter of a low, concrete-paved central courtyard. All doorways are at. We were led by turnkeys one. I noticed I were somewhere else.

Fortifications are designed to be as unwelcome as possible. Sentries even pass. In old forts, walking up a drawbridge closes off all contact with the outside.

Inconvenience is a good example. Security shields against. Although once surrounded by a moat that now has become a golf course, drawbridges no longer used to gain or sight.

Today, residents may gain to many residential enclaves. Stopped by sidewalk entrance markers, outsiders are arrested while business gates to allow insiders to enter into a private world.

Increasingly are portals that demand and connect different worlds or spaces.

Growing a point of in communities feelings of awe, reverence, joy, guilt or oppression. They purpose you for where you are going, and set the mood for arrival.

Open your door, step over from the past your and enter in to the brightness of 2012.

Your comments are invited at arteskjaer@philstarmedia.com

José Tence Ruiz at Duemila

"SEDUCATIVE PROXIES" contains new paintings, 3D pieces and assemblages of José Tence Ruiz. It is mounted in Galleria Duemila (Loring Street, Pasay; tel. 8536998; www.galleriaduemila.com) until Jan. 7.

After curating at Big and Small in "It Ain't Apocalypse Now(d)," by Jaycee Cortez, The collection focuses on the realities plaster of the human condition as presented in women, poetry. Spanish representation.

Gocum father and son at Artistike

"Before & Now," a show by Rafael "Boy" Ramos Gocum II and Rodolfo B Ordoña, is ongoing until Feb. 29 in Artistike Art Workshop (Aida Condominium, 2324 JG Tuason St., corner Belarmi St., Bel-Air, Makati; tel. 8443187; 0905-4933197). Scenes of home in the ribbon-cutting were former Sen. Heherson T. Alvarez, Bangkok Governor Sd. Florida, Tourism Mayor Macario Pineda, police director Samuel Pagdilao, former Secretary Leonardo Cruz Amores, former Manuel B. Estanislao, director-governor José Francisco, first lieut. Bobby Dub of Malhotra. Dilawan president Imelda Cajipe.

Legaspi at Finale

Raymund Legaspi is the latest in "Pop Mob," at Finale Art File (Silverhouse 17, Jacobo Fernandez Drive, Bgy. Bangkal, Makati; tel. 8162038, 8159894; e-mail info@finaleartfile.com).

Legaspi's works—canvas paintings depict Filipino icons—is humorous merging of objects of devotion from both mass media and religion. Recognizable personalities and trademarks are seriously transformed into ironical satires on the idea of public worship.

"LIGHT My Fire," by Raymund Legaspi

"SEDUCATIVE PROXIES," by Jaycee Cortez

'Memento Mori' at Big & Small

"Memento Mori" presents paintings by Mervin Aquino and Edwin Martinez in Silverlens' Big and Small Art Gallery (#18 369 Magsaysay, Bldg. A, Origins, Mandaluyong). The artists are members of the 6 O' Clock Habit group. Dr. Joel Mendez, curator, Call 5217638, 0917-8402683.

Simultaneously on exhibit is "Strange Stories," a solo show of new paintings by Wilfing Estrada, at the Video Room, and a two-man show by Paulo Nocturno and Mario Tampinco at the Tell Gallery.

"Strange Stories" features new oil-on-canvas works by Estrada: paintings of indicators, bags and trucks filled to the brim, packed and pregnant with unknown cargo.

All shows run until Jan. 28.

Various artists at Blanc

"Hierophoriums, a Cosmic Mystic Show" is running at Blanc Compound (358 Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong; tel. 0920-8276438; e-mail to hi@blanc.ph; web http://www.blanc.ph). It is a gathering of over 100 artists from visual arts, fashion, graphic design, illustrations, animation, music, architecture. Participating artists are Elmer Borlongan, Mark Justiniani, Lenney Hen, Geraldine Javier, Doug Abay, Ian Cabuna. Presented by Island Fresh Gallery.

BY JOSE Jose Ruiz

"STEREOGRAPHOBES," by Geraldine Guzman

Pierre Compound, 2241 Hemy Bonn Ave., Makati, tel. 8132038, 8132984; e-mail info@blancbuilds.com).

Legaspi's works—canvas paintings depict Filipino icons—is humorous merging of objects of devotion from both mass media and religion. Recognizable personalities and trademarks are seriously transformed into ironical satires on the idea of public worship.

Korean die artist at Momentous Arts, Singapore

"Clay Flora," paintings by Korean artist Choi Jae Il, is on view at Momentous Arts Gallery (29 Jalan 16, Singapore; e-mail to inquiries@mart.com.sg; until Jan. 14. Choi creates ghostly scenes: the work in it their own paintings. His unique oils are influenced by the art of the Arts. The illusionary colors in Buonocore's one's very of perceptions and challenges viewers' visual perception of his artworks. Bands of color and elements woven and change their appearances according to the viewers perspective. Most disconcerting is the ambiguous and sometimes unsettling mood that invites a visual investigation on the part of the viewer.

Silverlens at Singapore fair

Silverlens Galleries (www.silverlensphoto.com) will participate in Art Stage Singapore Contemporary Art Fair, Jan. 13-15, with two exhibition spaces. The General Booth (2.01 will present works by Frank Callaghan, Marianne Chang, Dennis Perez Buenaagua and Luis Lamosana. Callaghan will be showing his "Monochrome Illusion" series, which recently opened at Silverlens. The collection features a series of monochromatic works that appear over a horizon. Chang's compositions could appear to possibly both children and adults, utilizing rainbows, lightning bolts, tunnels and cartoon-looking caricatures in grayscale colors. Buenaagua will exhibit a painting of a lighted house and an enchanting landscape in black and white. Lamosana's "Cast Head" has a million things to express, but chooses to express it through a "gaze with a thousand words." Silverlens at Singapore will be the point of its, to reflect the four artists, in Project Stage B3.07 will be the solo exhibit of Constantino Ramos' series "A Vision to Dread It, Isaac." Ramos works with black and light, cosmic space and materials, he abstract and corresponding abstraction are ra... indiscriminately rust and imagined. His graphite tapestries are photographic, while installations extend what seems to be a penchant for existing things out of what they're not.

"SOUTHERN LORD," by Constantino Ramos

AT THE BLUEWATER Art Gallery in Maribago Bluewater Resort resort in Mactan, Cebu Miss Universe third runner-up Shamcey Supsup and gallery director Vic Vergara cut the ribbon.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ester G. Velarde

'Mission': $38.2M

LOS ANGELES—Tom Cruise's latest "Mission: Impossible" film topped the North American box office for a second week, ringing up $39.2 million over the long New Year weekend, industry data showed Tuesday. AFP

DID YOU KNOW...

CHEER FACTOR

Hurrah for 'Help'

LOS ANGELES—The Motion Picture Association of America announced this week that the publicity campaign for the Oscar-nominated film "The Help" helped boost the movie's box office take by $14 million.

The MPAA, which represents the major Hollywood studios, said the campaign, which included a social media component, helped the movie, which tells the story of African-American maids working for white families in the South in the 1960s, to gross $14 million in the month after the campaign began.

The movie, which has received four Oscar nominations, including best picture, has grossed $169 million in the US and Canada since its release in August. AFP

KRISTEN WIIG is "Bridesmaids"

Starlet's ex behind mysterious crime

By the Entertainment Staff

SEXY Starlet and Hunky Friend figured in a near-fatal incident. JG and DF are mum, if not downright evasive, about the details because it could dig a deeper hole for them.

Apparently, JG was once romantically involved with Controversial Personality, who soon got jealous of DF. SE was getting too chummy with DF and CF was naturally livid.

According to a mole, CP is now suspected of ordering his minions to hound and pressure an EE and DF.

Notorious snub

Note: Hatchetman Cokie's indecent lenses no bounds and doesn't distinguish between fellow celebrities and average folks.

PC was spotted shopping in a mall, bragging and autograph hunters approached PC, who was in a foul mood and ignored them.

One of the admirers courageously tapped PC on the shoulder. PC blurted out: SMARTY-ES

JSMITH, YM Marcelo Friends again!

DOUBLE EXPOSURE Sweetheart Billy Crawford and Nikki Gil entertain the crowd during a holiday concert by the stars in Mandaue City. Other performers were Vincent Bueno, Isabella, Kuh Ledesma, Ayla, Shiela Valderrama and Kris Lawrence. An impressive fireworks display followed the show.

Santiago won ₱50,000!

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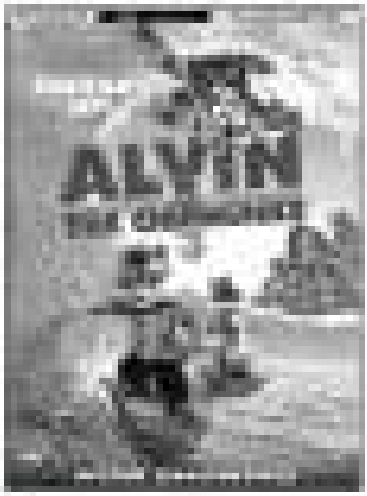
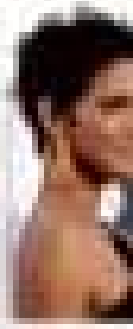
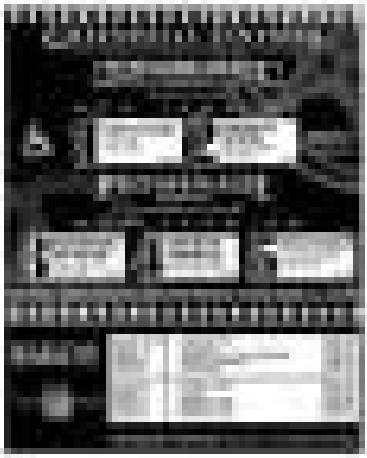
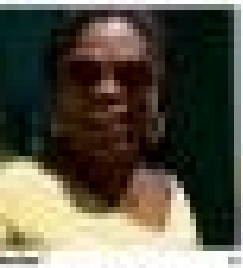
Hollywood's Obama

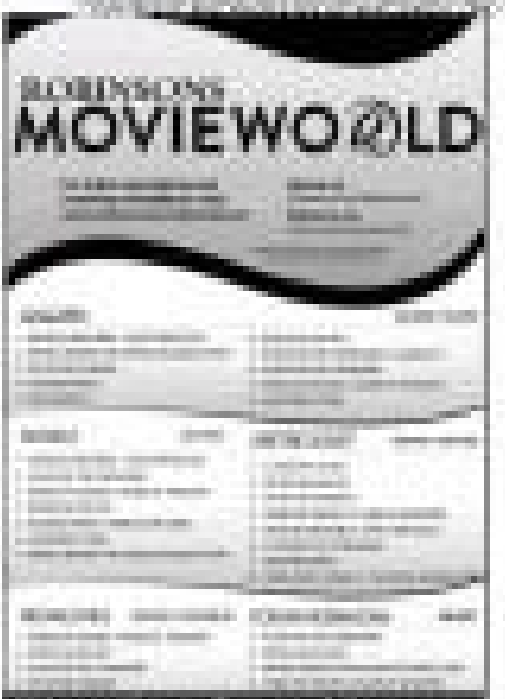


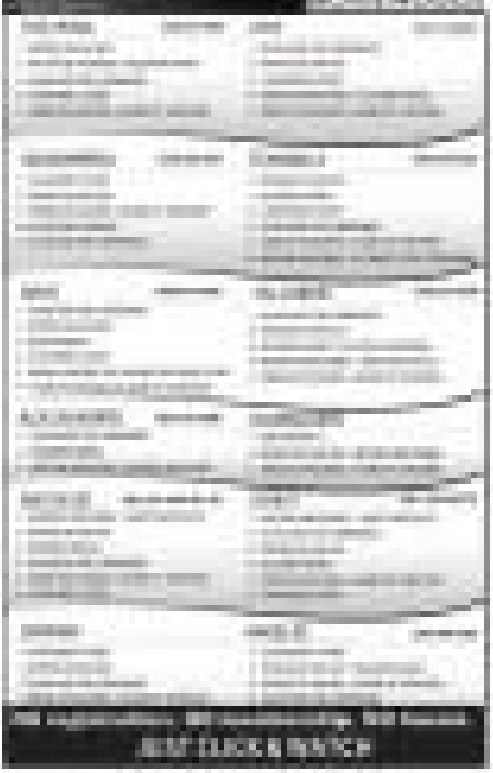




breakout star no more







"J. EDGAR" AND FUMIGFIED LOVER

Clint Eastwood (left, right photo) directs Leonardo DiCaprio in the Warner Bros. drama, "J. Edgar," about a compelling figure who captivated America and other whom the FBI building in Washington D.C. has been named. Armie Hammer (left, from "The Social Network") as the Nebraska native plays Clyde Tolson. J. Edgar Hoover's rumored lover.

Starlet's ex behind crime

From page 11

"Are you a cat or a dog? Why are you still leaving me around?" Then PC walked out, leaving the hapless fan speechless.

All in the family

If this dysfunctional family is hanging by a thread, it's because of a secret most foul.

An insider said some members of the clan are either junkies or pushers. Or both.

If the family members' behavior has been erratic and suspicious of late, blame drug addiction.

As they say, the family that shoots drugs together ...

Picture imperfect

Glamour-ous Celebrities seems to be living a charmed life—with a picture-perfect career and family, to boot.

Privately however, GC is struggling with a painful parenting problem.

GC is often seen visiting a school located in a secluded subdivision. According to sources, GC's beloved Child is confined in that school for kids with special needs.

So while celebrities, friends, fans, judges and medical GC has yet to open up about it. Instead, GC has chosen to suffer in silence.

Open house

A former employee was shocked by a basic insatiable appetites.

Talented Iconic's home is always open to cute, young boys, the spy revealed.

And TC never runs out of gentlemen callers—day and night, 24-7, even on holidays.

Goodness ko!

Carmina leaving GMA 7

Carmina is definitely leaving GMA 7 for ABS-CBN. She is signing up this month, and will be in the cast of the kapuso's remake "Bituin".

Bonner cancelled

LOS ANGELES—"Mission: Impossible" star Jeremy Renner emerged unscathed from a bar fight in Thailand, his spokesperson said last week, but a hotel manager in his party was attacked with an ax.

A spokesperson for Renner, 40, who also played the lead in Swat-whizzing King was movie "The Hurt Locker," denied media reports that the actor was hurt in the bloody incident in the Thai resort of Phuket early on Wednesday.

Sources: Renner was indeed in a bar in Phuket, Thailand, as a routine altitude on a patron took place but was not injured or involved. He exited as the fight took place," Renner's publicist said in a statement.

Renner is currently in the Philippines to

GOLDEN Epanio jackpot!

SHANNA Magbayani: Back with Lloydie!

JEREMY Renner escaped unscathed in Phuket.

work on "The Bourne Legacy"—the latest in the Bourne action movie franchise, the publicist said.

Reuters

Face of Dior

LOS ANGELES—"Friends with Benefits" actress Mila Kunis is the latest celebrity to become the face of Dior, the French fashion label said on Thursday.

"I am absolutely thrilled," Kunis, 28, said in a statement. She will be the model in the Miss Dior handbag collection in the brand's Spring/Summer 2012 advertising campaign, appearing worldwide this month.

The "Black Swan" actress is joining her Oscar-winning costar Natalie Portman, who is the face of the Miss Dior Cherie perfume, along with Charlize Theron, who is the face of the J'adore Dior fragrance and French actress Marion Cotillard, who models the Lady Dior handbags. Theron and Cotillard are also crucial Oscar winners.

Reuters

Top of the Tabloids

The top chismis (tsi, news in the business sidebar) Bandera (and who we are proud if we are moved):

■ DIZZY manobyerna: dun kay Miss Asian? (Was that boxing steroid?)

■ Nuno ngo kayang mag-manonding tamalupay? Pero Grands manood si ng ako? (That's what he said.)

■ Bong tongpoo ang pagong No. 1 sina Vic at Ai Ai. (But are bound 'di siya nagpaawat ang No. 2!)

■ John Lloyd, ayoko ya malapong mag-pahayad (Ah ... wagi)

■ Erich Gonzales, mili John, upon ay pawis. (Ew.)

■ Pinde magpakasintoso kay Angel 'wag kung magpapagawin. (We wonder what's man's reason to do?)

■ Di nawak na may magaling a Bom Aganduto sa KBL, Dingdong dapat ang ang best actor award. (Believe nickay?)

■ Jessa Zaragoza, Dennis, bati ayo bumbon ang drama. (Finish-ish na nan ito.)

■ Richi pasumalay ang kanet-sharpay sa tenga, kan KBL jackpot ay ito si MMFF. (Of course, considering ...)

■ Pinde bahay na bahay pa rin, anak pa-rahasiter na. (Let's know the boy out of this.)

■ Operasyon si Nora sa lalamunan raday na. "Magaling nyo-nyalagyan-aliw" (You got it. Don't fight, guys!)

■ "Inday" nagbawal ng PDE para sa mang kanta ng Tsito for lesen. 'Mad Vlado.' ("It's a crazy song ...")

■ John bulak ulanin si Shalon kay Llovdie. (Dunis dun nanon chuy'or hook regrets ... si Aimee broke up?)

■ Oyo di daw bole kay Pradeen para kay Vic. (Sweet na lang. Either lesson from).

VIC Sotto's Dyo disappearance of Pandesal

MILA Kunis, ever face of Dior

ENTERTAINMENT

Something new for celebs in 2012

LIFE is too short to be kept hating. So why don't you surprise yourself this 2012 and do something you've never done before? If you keep doing the same things over and over again, what's the point of calling it a new year?

Make a change or be charmed to your old ways. Sometimes it's more exciting to be close to the danger zone than to be stuck in your comfort zone.

With that in mind, I asked some celebs what they want to do for the very first time this 2012. As your seer, I will try to include universal glimmers in my travel plans this year and divinate from the wonderful stuff.

Don't let the Year of the Dragon just drag on. Live it up, explore new places and experience things beyond your wildest dreams. Solve into 2012 (head over heels).

ANNE CURTIS: "To have my first ever solo concert and world tour."

MIRIAM QUIAMBAO: "To write a book."

MARK GIL: "A beach trip with all my five kids and my grandchildren. That would bring me total happiness."

ALEX GONZAGA: "I wanna try traveling somewhere out of the country alone. I don't think my parents will allow me but I would love to try it even for a few days, so I can feel independent and self-reliant for once."

KITE: "To learn capoeira (Brazilian martial art) and Muay Thai boxing."

JEN BARELA: "If given the chance, I would like to try out cosmopolitan, serving and diverting a master. For a change, I would like to be behind the scenes. Calling artists and concert producers who might be interested to take a chance with me..."

CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA: "To release a song in the United States."

PINKY AMADOR: "To paraglide and dance to modern, jumpy beats in plane."

PORONG: "Matupad ko sana gustong matuto mag-chinese para sa akin. This year, dedicate ko akong mga viral mag-chino. At si movie dong 'A Mother's Story' first time kong magpapunta ng mga nominated."

BO CERQUEN: "Aside from planning my vacation, I plan on a bigger scale this year and start building my own home. I would like to get into the real estate business, like a build-and-sell thing."

ROBERT SENA: "I want to reach the summit of Mt. Apo. I say that almost every year. I hope 2012 will finally be the year I'll get to do it."

AMY ALMIRO: "Work with my idol Sharon Cuneta and maybe even do a duet with her."

KEVIN ALEJANDRO: "To compose all the songs for my next album and write movie scripts for myself."

VINCE DIZON: "To go to Europe. I've been to many places except Europe, so I've booked my tickets for Amsterdam and London next month."

ARCHIE ALEMZOR: "To stick to what the bible says."

MR. FU: "Thinking of having a tattoo this year. I want Bo Chanter Ye' symbol on my left arm. Sana long may pambos tattoo at hindi sila mag-mukhang bigas-bigas lipstick gang members. May power!"

Kapuso night

I am flying to Kalibo, Aklan today to join GMA 7's telecast "Kapuso Night" celebrations of the All-Aklan. Aklanons, such Claudine Barretto, Rjhi, Mark Herras, Rhea Madrigal, Steven Silva and Bubbles Paraiso at 3 p.m. today at Kalibo's Nuevasa Park. Highlights of the event will be aired on GMA 7's regional stations on 4th, 10, 11 Mga! Ada 'Bo!

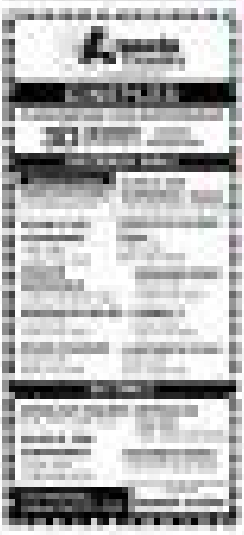
E-mail the columnist at wineking_dollywood@yahoo.com

PORONG: "I'd like to learn how to chino."

ANNE Curtis' concert and world tour

ROBERT Sena: "I want to reach the summit of Mt. Apo."

Used For Sale!



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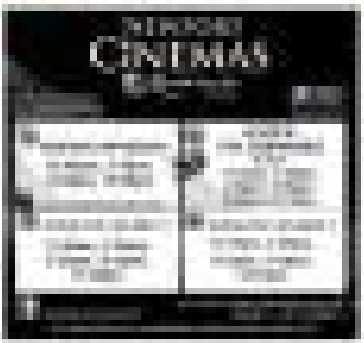
CINEMAS

MOVIE TIME
MOVIE SPECIAL
MALL EVENTS
MALL SPECIAL

Comedians may rule this season

OMB runs after music pirates, too

GMA

PINAKA-AABANGAN, PINAKA-MAKULAY AT PINAKA-MALALAKING PROGRAMA NGAYONG

2012

YEAR OF THE DRAGON

JANUARY 16
TELEBABAD

FEBRUARY 6
TELEBABAD

FEBRUARY 13
TELEBABAD

FEBRUARY 6

FEBRUARY 6

FEBRUARY 13

MARCH 5

WEEKDAYS

JANUARY 23

FEBRUARY 6

FEBRUARY 13

SOON

SOON

SOON

SOON

SOON

LEARNING
Editor Chelo Bansil-Formoso
Email: learning@inquire.com.ph

AUTUMN IN GUANGZHOU

They left as *Xavier boys* and returned as men

By Soren Lee-Chua
Contributor

THE SIX weeks my 12th Xavier School Grade 7 classmates, 12 teachers, and I spent in Guangzhou, China, last year were the most challenging for me.

During our stay from late October to early December, we were up by 6 a.m., prayed, ate breakfast and marched from our dormitory to the classroom where we were taught Mandarin for three straight hours.

Teachers of Jinan China Normal University corrected our diction and expanded our vocabulary.

Time management was essential. Noon break was not just for lunch, but also for soccer and basketball. In my case, also a nap.

Then it was back to the classroom for Chinese history of kung fu, Chinese crafts and all our other subjects, since our grades for the third quarter of the school year would be based on them.

After classes, we bought groceries, did laundry and cleaned bathrooms, before tackling the assignments: religious reflections and videos in Filipino, science experiments, English papers, social studies surveys of the customs and beliefs of university residents, complete with statistics.

We were supposed to be in bed by 10 p.m., but some of us literally burned the midnight oil.

No man is an island

In 2004, Xavier School director Fr. Johnny Go, S.J., started the Xavier China Experience (XCE) to immerse students in Chinese language and culture to make them more attuned to other peoples, particularly since most of us had Chinese ancestry.

Coordinated by the Office of International Programs, headed by Brian Shimada and Jennifer Ong, XCE helped us grow. For more than a month without parents or tutors, we dealt with our own problems about academics, injuries and homesickness.

We worked and played, ate and exercised, laughed and commiserated with friends. When we were in a fight, spat, a friend hailed us out. And when someone had a crisis, we kept him company.

By limiting our mobile calls, we all connected. XCE encouraged us to be independent, although I don't believe in independence alone. I believe in independent souls building a community together.

Follow the saint

On weekends, we took breaks. We visited the Science Center, the Chimelong Safari, the Tee Mall. My favorite was Shamgshuan Island where our school patron saint, the Spanish Jesuit St. Francis Xavier, died in 1552.

After swimming and riding buggies on sand, we went into high holy gear as we climbed winding mountain roads to our saint's tomb. Cultures mingled as we prayed [Catholic version] and lighted incense [Chinese ancestor respect].

We returned saintly steps as we went up yet another slope. Missionary work, it seemed, involved exercise as well. We could not see the top from the bottom, but we knew it was there.

I imagined if Xavier climbing the mountain, symbolic of his very mission, unable to see the road but believing in every step, as he walked by God.

The trip was beneficial first on its primary counts, book learning, extracurricular life-wise in the city. Even the aromas of evil eats would not mar the wondrous sights, DMCI—to all senses.

God is in the small things

But however grand these moments were, my fondest memories were of the little things and the lessons we learned.

Aerobics through climbing up and down five flights of stairs in the dorm plus six flights to the school at least three times a day. Muscular endurance through squatting in the toilets, plus squatting in kung fu to the master's cries of "Mabu!" (horse stance). Weight lifting through the dredging of the heavy water dispenser tanks.

Bargaining in the markets and games of penny-die. Meals of nemasi noodles and rice (Guangzhou) milk tea instead the cereal. Fixing the busted water pipe in our room. Putting on several layers of clothing on chilly mornings. Navigating the crazy subways.

These are what I will remember decades from now.

God hides in little things, seemingly ordinary yet somehow deep-day-to-day happenings. On rainy days, the five classmates with umbrellas formed a line, shoulder to shoulder, so everybody would get to the canteen safe and dry. That was God working through us.

When the requirements seemed never-ending, I remembered what my grandfather (God speaking through him) said: "Life won't stop throwing problems at you, you just have to keep going past them until you reach your goal." It eased the pressure.

Suddenly, I had more time to play basketball, watch movies and take naps. I learned to relax in for the body regenerate. With hard, party hardies. God would agree.

A dozen Xavier teachers took care of us and shared this experience of a lifetime. They were not only excellent mentors, but also exceptional football, basketball and frisbee players.

Our families lived XCE with us from afar, linked by twice-weekly phone calls and the Web.

XCE was the hardest experience of my life. But it was also one of the best. We left as boys, we returned as men.

Visit our trip's website at: xcegguangzhou2011.shutterfly.com

(Editor's Note: Jimmi Lee Chua, a seventh grader at Xavier School, now considers Guangzhou his second home. The XCE is a comprehensive study tour requiring participants to learn Chinese language and culture while completing academic requirements.)

AT PLAY during the soccer tournament at South China Normal University

THE AUTHOR (standing, far right) and friends, with CLE teacher Mike Llarenas, at St. Francis Xavier Church on Shangchuan Island

Assignment: DepEd

Fresh curriculum for first grade, first year

By Tarra Quismundo

HOPING to bring more relevant education to Filipino students, the Department of Education (DepEd) is set to introduce this year a more "learner-centered" curriculum for Grade 1 and first year high school, Education Secretary Armin Luistro has said.

The move is part of a phased curriculum revamp for the gradual implementation of K-12 (Kindergarten to 12 years), the Aquino administration's flagship education program that aims to produce highly qualified high school graduates by extending the 10-year education cycle by two years.

"We will implement a fresh, enjoyable, dynamic, learner-centered curriculum," Luistro said in the keynote.

"The curriculum is just the second of the years [but the real revolution in education is to make the curriculum so immersive, enjoyable and a real learning experience for the students," he said.

The new Grade 1 and first year high school program will debut this June 2012.

Luistro noted that the new curriculum, being prepared by top officials and experts from the academe, was designed to deviate from the traditional learning context that is "heavy on memorization" and limit "very little on critical thinking."

"It is very teacher-centered. And so when the teacher is absent, the students can no longer study ... they don't have the initiative," Luistro said of the current curriculum.

DepEd intended to change that by starting where learners were, Luistro said.

Key in this shift is the institutionalization of mother-tongue-based teaching, where students from Grades 1 to 3 will be taught in their native language, a method proven to be more effective in reading. DepEd is currently developing learning materials in the country's major regional languages.

SECRETARY Armin Luistro

Luistro said first graders would also be required to go to school for only half a day, or four hours of basic learning.

"For Grade 1, we will only require them to go to school for half a day. Going to school must not be a burden for them. They have to enjoy it. It's critical that they like going to school," said the education chief.

For high school, meanwhile, DepEd is developing a new first year curriculum that is more interactive. For instance, science learning will be based on "science of everyday life."

"We're making sure the curriculum is really responsive to what industry is looking for and what students will enjoy," Luistro said.

DepEd started the phased implementation of K-12 with the expansion of the kindergarten program in the current school year. Targeting 5-year olds, the institutionalization of the public kinder garten system aims to better prepare first-time learners for basic education.

DepEd aims to complete the implementation of K-12 with the addition of two years of senior high school by 2018.

"For the first time in our history, we will require them to go to school for a full day. Going to school must not be a burden for them. They have to enjoy it. It's critical that they like going to school," said the education chief.

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Good teachers have lasting positive effect

WASHINGTON—Elementary and middle school teachers who help raise their students' standardized test scores seem to have a wide-ranging, lasting positive effect on those students' later beyond academics, including lower teenage pregnancy rates and greater college enrollment and adult earnings, according to a new study that tracked 2.5 million students over 20 years.

The paper, by Raj Chetty and John N. Friedman of Harvard and Jonah E. Rockoff of Columbia, all economists, examines a large number of students over a longer period of time with more in-depth data than many earlier studies, allowing for a deeper look at how much the quality of individual teachers matters over the long term.

"That test scores help you get more education, and that more education has an earnings effect—that makes sense to a lot of people," said Robert H. Meyer, director of the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which studies teacher measurement but was not involved in this study. "This study skips the wages, and shows differences in teachers' mean differences in earnings."

The study, which the economists professors have presented in colloquiums in more than a dozen seminars over the past year and plans to submit to a journal, is the largest look yet at the controversial "value-added ratings," which measure the impact individual teachers have on student test scores. It is likely to influence the roiling national debate about improvement of quality teachers and how best to measure that quality.

Many school districts, including those in Washington and Houston, have begun to use value-added metrics to help determine whether to hire, pay and even fire.

Supporters argue that such metrics hold teachers accountable and can help improve the educational outcomes of millions of children. Detractors, most notably a number of teachers' unions, say that isolating the effect of a given teacher is harder than it seems, and might unfairly penalize some instructors.

Critics particularly point to the high margin of error with

CONTINUED

Conference to discuss PH's readiness for 'K to 12'

THE LEADERSHIP Strategies for School Managers (LEASM) conference will be held on Jan. 19 and 20 at the ADB Conference Center in Makati City.

Theme of the conference is "Preparing, Developing and Equipping K to 12 School Leaders: Academic Enhancement and Transition Management."

Heads of educational institutions are expected to attend.

Speakers, which include professors Adolfo Aran III and Raquel Cruz, Dr. Purificacion Glorre and Lilia Ortigas, are expected to share insights and recommendations on how to best implement the K to 12 program in Philippine schools' curricula, faculty training, business management and other key factors.

The government is set to implement the K to 12 basic education program starting next school year.

Under the plan, public school students will have a year in kindergarten, six years in elementary, four years in junior high school and two years in senior high school.

But critics say the program will only mean more expense for parents and the government.

The Philippines is apparently the only country in Asia that still runs a 10-year curriculum.

The Department of Education has assured the public that the physical resources needed will be covered in two years. The plan includes 153,585 new classrooms, 103,309 teachers, 93.6 million additional books, and 13.2 million classroom seats.

Healing after 'Sendong'

AFTER Tropical Storm "Sendong," residents of Cagayan de Oro (CDO) were filled with conflicting emotions.

Disbelief that the tragedy happened in their area. Helplessness in escaping the floods. Anger at the illegal loggers, informal settlers, commercial reclamation, unresponsive government. Grief that families, friends, neighbors perished. Guilt that they survived.

Psychologists from the Ateneo de Manila University hastened to the survivors' feelings when they defended the victims. Debriefing was essential for survivors to start to make sense of what happened.

The Ateneo team, headed by vice president for planning and administration Edna Franco and acting psychology department chair Melissa Principato, rushed to Xavier University (XU) right after landing to do crisis counseling and case personnel, in coordination with XU chaplain Fr. Eric Alejandro, S.J.

If that was how the adults felt, what about the children?

Art therapy

In a crisis, adults can express their feelings and communicate with each other. Kids are another matter. Scared and unable to express their emotions clearly, traumatized children may claim up, have nightmares, misbehave, become violent, or lapse into depression.

Queenie N. Lee-Chua

But if they cannot speak, they can draw. Pioneered more than a century ago in the United States and Europe, art therapy has been the treatment of choice for children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Victims are encouraged to bube art in response to experiences.

Art therapy is used not just to express gross up emotions and promote coping skills, but also to increase a sense of stability and to establish social support.

The chairman of Art Therapy Association says, "For therapy uses the creative process of art making to improve and enhance physical, mental and emotional well-being. The creative process involved in artistic self-expression helps people to resolve conflicts and problems, develop interpersonal skills, manage behavior, reduce stress, increase self-esteem and self-awareness, and achieve insight. Art therapy integrates the fields of human development, visual art (such as drawing, painting), and the creative process with models of counseling and psychotherapy."

Ateneo psychologists used art therapy to help Cmdeo victims a few years back. They did the same thing with Sendong survivors.

More than 60 children, aged 2-14, were ensconced in XU covered courts during and after Sendong. Psychologist Linnie Alcantara designed the drawing and storytelling activities, as the team distributed crayons and coloring books to the kids.

"Some kids drew themselves in the rescue and trees," said psychologist Regina Urdaneta-Alcantara, JD.

Psychologist Mendiola Icing Calleja told her 11-year-old daughter Iskra Andrea what happened to the kids. Iskra's children were so shocked by the floodwaters that even the sight of a glass of water made them fearful.

Iskra promptly drew a glass of water. "This is what the children saw and experienced wherever they are water," she said. (See picture.)

"Through the drawings, the children also demonstrated the resilience of their spirits," Alcantara said.

Despite everything, Princess drew together once more. There were multilingual volunteers, generous donors, rescued residents and para, heroic rescuers, miraculous tales of survival.

"The tragedy was only matched by the will of many to survive or to reach out to be of assistance to others with a greater need," said Alcantara.

The drawn team went to CDO as trainers, but ended up learning from the survivors. Calleja said, "It was a great helping and learning experience, which made me more ready and able to respond to similar situations in the days and years to come. I hope that more psychologists, through the Psychological Association of the Philippines, will be given the opportunity and will be willing to undergo training the responders' workshops so that they are well trained."

Some children drew a serene country scene, with mountains, rivers, flowers, and butterflies. But then they flooded over the scene with brown crayons. "Gone," they told Urdaneta.

Resilience

Through drawing, many of the children were able to express what they felt. This was the first step to healing. "Children draw the horrors they experienced in the floods," said psychologist Antonio Alcantara, Jr.

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PSYCHOLOGIST Amanda Alcantara Jr. helps young "Sendong" victims in Cagayan de Oro through art therapy

TEN-YEAR-OLD Iskra Andrea Calleja's drawing of child survivors' fear of even a glass of water

NICE CDO: Don Bosco with USD+DI experts Jane Ray Smith and Dr. Nicci Smith from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

NAT topnotcher Marikina grade school opens high school

PRIVATE school Ingenium will open a first year high school class in school year 2012-13, as it starts offering secondary education.

The grade school, which topped the 2009 and 2010 National Achievement Test (NAT) in Marikina City beating 17 public and 28 private schools, is opening its high school in preparation for the K-12 Program of the Department of Education (DepEd).

Ingenium director and coordinator Dr. Ester B. Bonbagtan said the school provided first class physical facilities at all levels as it had always tried to provide the best possible support to its teachers.

Librarian were well stocked and every classroom had access to the Internet and equipped with LCD projectors.

Ingenium inaugurated recently a four-story building near Marikina Hotel.

Bonbagtan said the facilities and resources the school made available to students probably made a possible for Ingenium to top the NAT in 2009 and 2010 in Marikina without special preparations.

The 2009 class was actually composed of Ingenium's first grade school graduates.

Ingenium's preschool and elementary graduates also totally passed entrance tests of the country's top schools, Bonbagtan said.

She said, in terms of academics, Ingenium's standards were initially benchmarked on such schools as the dozens de Manila University and Xavier School. The school also kept classes small to promote learning.

Bonbagtan said Ingenium believed all students had talents. Children only needed to be stimulated, encouraged and guided, through a solid curriculum and first rate instruction, to they could develop to their fullest potential.

An important aspect of Ingenium's efforts to make its students the best they could be was facilitators teachers' education. From entrance and professional qualifications, teachers were screened on their attitude toward students, if they were truly student-centered in planning their lessons and in teaching, and in organizing curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The Ingenium School (tel. 9349521, 9427859, 9421151, 9434867) is on Ocean St., Bgy. Concepcion Dos, 500 Village, Marikina City, near the Marikina-Infanta Provincial Boundary.

Educators get update on teaching trends

MORE than 800 of the country's top educators attended the recent 2011 Best Annual Educators' Congress.

During two days of discussions and workshops, participants learned about latest developments and trends in teaching and education from renowned experts.

Brit Book Store Inc. (BBSI), the Philippines' leading educational publishing company, hosted the annual event that focused on USD+DI (Understanding by Design and Differentiated Instruction), a complementary teaching models that underscored the importance of curriculum planning and instructional design in enhancing the effectiveness of learning and instruction.

Speakers and resource persons included Jane Ray Smith and Dr. Nicci Smith, USD and DI experts from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. USD+DI instructor and ASCD faculty members Carol Tomlinson and Jay McTighe shared their extensive knowledge and experience through video-packed discussions and a live webinar.

Elinor 2009's Brit Book Store has promoted a deeper understanding and appreciation of USD, that empowers tackled introduction to the UbD concept and the enhanced principle of Schooling by Design.

This year BBSI partnered with ASCD, a leading international educational organization, to add DI to the discussions.

Participants previewed Brit Book Store's newest titles that used the UbD+DI framework, such as the "Math for Life" and "English Encounters" series for elementary, among others.

Another highlights of the event was the UbD+DI online quiz. Delegates determined what type of learner they were through the interactive activity that classified people according to learning type.

During the 2011 Brit Annual Educators' Congress, the company's partnerships with ASCD and Knowledge Channel were also launched. Brian Gomez, ASCD consultant for Southeast Asia, talked about the collaboration of ASCD and BBSI. Rina Lopez, president of Knowledge Channel, told the audience they could expect more integrated and rich educational videos and other media to complete the students' learning experience.

The Educators' Congress also signaled the start of the annual Brit Bookfair, a series of USD+DI events to be conducted in 28 cities all over the Philippines until March.

With the theme "Integrating USD and DI: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners," the series aims to bring the concept of USD+DI to more than 14,000 educators through daylong seminar-workshops.

Sessions are designed to enrich the teachers' knowledge on the integration of USD+DI, and allow them to take the first USD+DI to toward full implementation in the classroom.

USD+DI speakers, who trained directly with ASCD faculty and USD+DI experts, will facilitate the series.

Three new classrooms for Pampanga school

JOLLIBEE has given three new classrooms to San Isidro Elementary School in Guagua, Pampanga, as part of its Build-a-Classroom Project.

Present at the classroom turn-over were Jollibee Secretary Bruther Antonio Luistro, Guagua Mayor Ricardo Rivera, Jollibee Philippines president Jose Mitchua, Jollibee Foundation president Grace Tan Calalang and Jollibee Franchisee Association chair Bienvenido Mesquita.

Luistro commended Jollibee, saying it was among the first in the private sector to respond to the government's call to help build the big classroom gap. He said any initiative that benefited children was an investment in the future.

Luistro noted that the school would also be benefiting from Jollibee Foundation's Busog, Lusog, Talino (BLT) program.

Mitchua said Jollibee had always had a soft spot for Filipino children, and wanted to help build young minds as they could pursue their dreams.

Tan Calalang said the foundation hoped to bring the BLT Jollibee program to all schools that needed help.

Ashland principal Rodolfo Sibug, Jr. said Jollibee's efforts in education would help give more children better opportunities.

The Build-A-Classroom program was a component of Jollibee Wings ang Puso in 2010, which raised money through Jollibee's hit novelty offering—the Jollibee and Friends doll.

The food chain was able to sell more than 600,000 dolls, raising a total of P12 million. The Jollibee Foundation Association and Jollibee Foundation donated an additional P8 million, bringing the total project fund to P20 million, enough for the construction of 40 public school classrooms.

To far, Jollibee has completed 28 classrooms for public schools in Norzal Visayas, Batangas, Davao, Camarines and Davao.

Recipients were chosen from schools that benefit from the Jollibee Feeding Program that provides lunch for 116 days to undernourished Grades 1 and 2 pupils.

BLT, which also enlists the support of local governments, private companies and individuals, has benefited over 25,000 pupils from 444 schools nationwide.

EDUCATION: Secretary Armin Luistro assists a pupil during lunch, while Jollibee Foundation vice president Ruben Rillo and president Grace Tan Calalang look on.

Seminar on effective business writing Jan. 19

THE CENTER for Global Best Practices is holding a seminar on "Write Right for Results: A Best Practices Guide to Writing Give-page Letters, Memos and Reports" on Jan. 19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Felix Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

Communication expert Dr. Rodolfo "Dope" de los Reyes will conduct the interactive and motivational workshop.

He will share real and current examples and effective strategies in business communication.

Topics include the Golden Rule and 10 commandments of writing, qualities for one-page memos, business correspondence formulas, etc. for fueling conclusions and directions.

The seminar is expected to be useful to employees in a corporate environment including those in sales, marketing or operations.

Good business writing will boost a company's corporate image, profitability and growth.

Dr. los Reyes, who has bachelor's and master's degrees in English and a doctorate degree in communication from the University of the Philippines, has over 30 years of experience as trainer and lecturer for local and multi-national companies.

He has conducted seminars and training activities in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Qatar and the United States. He has also written 12 best-selling books.

Log on to www.cgbp.org for details and schedule of other seminars.

Call 8427148/59/, 9566866/69 or Manila; 032-5123106/07 in Cebu; and 074-4285148 in Baguio.

Playgrounds for the MIND

Copy Editor Chayrie Medina

Member Schools

Archbishop Tagle to grace St. Paul centennial celebration

Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle will be the principal celebrant of the St. Paul University Manila centennial mass on Jan. 25, 9 a.m., at the Manila Cathedral. The mass, which formally opens the celebration of the hundredth year of SPU Manila, will be preceded by a motorcade from the university to the cathedral, and will be attended by the entire school community—Sisters, faculty, staff, students, alumni—as well as guests from the Church, government, the academe, media, and other sectors of society.

After the mass, guests will go to the university for lunch in the 1906 Training Center. The formal opening of the SPU Manila Museum and Archives follows next, succeeded by the unveiling and blessing of the commemorative marker and ceremonial sculptural tableau, executed by noted sculptor Arlie Lluch.

The climax of the weeklong celebration will be the grand centennial alumni homecoming on Jan. 29, 2 p.m., at the SMX Convention Center. Highlights of the homecoming include the launching of the centennial coffee table book, "A Hundred Thousand Miracles," edited by Marionette Ocampo-Martinez; a formal dinner; and a show featuring members from the jubilarian classes (1952 and 1957, 1962 and 1967, 1972 and 1977, 1982 and 1987) including the present faculty, staff, students, SPU Manila Chorale, and Pasiklaseng-Pasiklaseklas such as Pilita Corrales, Janet Basco, Cynthia Patag, KC Rivera-de, and Annabelle Abrigo. Program host will be Edu Manzano, who is also a Paulinian.

Principal sponsors of the homecoming event are ABS-CBN, Banco de Oro, Ambassador to Chile Ms. Consuelo Puyat Reyes, the family of Hilario L. Reynoso, and Wilhelmina Lara Armstrong. Pepsi Cola and Jollibee are among the principal donors.

SPU Manila president, Sr. Lilia Therese L. Tolentino, RPC, and Sherry Lara-Abigael, president of the St. Paul Alumni Foundation Inc. (SPAAFI), enjoin all alumni to join these centennial events. Reservations for the coffee table book and dinner-show are being accepted by the SPAAFI office secretary, Susan Arabaya, at 525-4259.

UP Law centennial concert set on Jan. 13

"THE LEGAL Luminaries in Concert: A Celebration of 100 Years of Excellence" will be staged on Friday, Jan. 13, 7:00 p.m., at the Film Center, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City, according to a joint announcement by U.P. College of Law Concert Committee co-chair Myrna S. Feliciano and co-chair Elena Fronda.

The concert celebrates the 100 years of existence of the U.P. College of Law, and showcases the talents of the U.P. Law alumni. Justice Magdangal de Leon, former Senator Richard Gordon and Jovy Lim, Deputy Ombudsman Wilfredo Lapitan, and Atty. Dee Gamboa, Marie Andres, Mike Toledo, Bernard Lopez, Ulderico Benavidez, Ray Balajadia, Victor Abueva, Jovie Andres, Nick Naraja, Jonathan Rose-Sant, Jo Concepcion, and many more.

Singing professors Myrna Feliciano, Cle Jardeleza, Ed Lubrica, Pete Derwin, Bowie Morales, Gigi Reyes, Bing Gonzales and AJ Bidol will present a finale production number.

Concert tickets are available at P500 and P300 for students.

UST Psych alumni holds grand homecoming

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Association of Thomasian Psychology Alumni (UST ATPA) will hold its first grand alumni homecoming dubbed as "I Psychoot: The Beginning" to launch its scholarship foundation and commemorate the birth of its legal tie-titus, who introduced Psychology to UST.

The event will take place on March 3, 6 p.m., at Metro Concert Hall, West Avenue, Quezon City. For more information and ticket reservations, please call us at 406-1611 local 8223, 8907) 417-4092, or e-mail ipsychoot@yahoo.com. For updates, visit Facebook: IPSYCHOOT: THE BEGINNING or follow Twitter: @ipsychoot.

FEU volunteers beautify PGH children's ward

THIRTY volunteers, composed of administrators, students, and staff of Far Eastern University rendered 100 man-hours at the recent Bonaffino 2011 organized by Hands-on Manila (HOM) Foundation, which is celebrating its 10th founding year. His a Benaffino-driven activity, aimed to beautify an open recreation garden at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Pediatric Ward under the guidance of sculptor Imay Pilapil. Other prominent personalities who joined the FEU volunteers on the recent mission were U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas Jr., Hands-on co-founder of HOM, Ms. Gloria Montinola, and PGH Pediatrics Department chair Dr. Clementa Padilla. The FEU group was led by vice president for Academic Services Dr. Miguel Carpio, together with Student Affairs director Dr. Marilou Eco and Student Leadership Development coordinator Dr. Sharon Tupaez. Pilapil guided the volunteers in improving the landscape of the said garden. For culminating activity at noon, the group proceeded to the SMX Convention Center to join some 100,000 volunteers. FEU president Dr. Lydia Echauz received a plaque of appreciation from HOM. FEU board chair Dr. Lourdes Montinola was also present at the event. The Hands-On Manila Bonaffino is a full-day of service celebration with thousands of volunteers who have

TIP inaugurates Anniversary Hall

TECHNOLOGICAL Institute of the Philippines (TIP) recently inaugurated its Anniversary Hall located in Quezon City. The new hall was constructed in time for the school's 50th year anniversary celebration this year. It will serve as the venue for the grand alumni homecomings of TIP's Manila and Quezon City alumni groups and the employees' night with the TIP Ironside. Other activities in commemoration of the school's golden anniversary like the International Conference on Outcomes-Based Teaching and Learning (OBTL) will also be held at this venue. The Anniversary Hall, as it is called, is fully equipped with sound, lights, and multi-media systems, as well as video broadcasting equipment, enabling the hall to accommodate a wide variety of events and activities.

contributed to the development of the community and provided assistance to marginalized sectors in Metro Manila. It is a day that combines service and relevant activities that are fun. HOM Benaffino encourages corporations and their employees to step out of the office space, participate actively, and work as a volunteer team by helping others in a meaningful manner. More information is available at www.handsonmanila.org.ph.

K-12 modeling for private schools set

A PRELIMINARY meeting for all schools with Grade 7 programs for the K-12 System on Jan. 12 will be held at Claret School of Quezon City on Jan. 10 or 11 a.m. Invitations will be handed out by the Department of Education through the office of Asst. Sec. Tonisito Umali.

Among the schools requested to participate are Claret, Ateneo de Manila, Xavier School, Immaculate Conception Academy, La Salle Cordoliang, Pesoda, Colegio San Agustin, St. Paul Pasig, Londen Mandaluyong, and Miriam. The K-12 Summit will be held at Miriam College.

The K-12 curriculum will bring Philippine education to international standards. Currently, Philippine high school diplomas are not recognized by top foreign universities that generally require six years of secondary education. The makes it difficult for graduates to seek admission and scholarships abroad.

Claret was chosen as one of the models for the implementation of the new K-12 curriculum for private schools. The school has always had a Grade 7 level, and its enhanced Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) makes it similar to the proposed Deped's spiral-based curriculum. Likewise, Claret's Technology Living Education (TLE) program is already at the level which is now to be required for senior high school.

Umali met with Claret heads to discuss the modeling of the K-12 curriculum program. The K-12 program means that there will be kinder, six years of grade school education (with graduation and diploma), four years of junior high school (with graduation and diploma), and two years of senior high school (with graduation and diploma).

Public schools will start implementing the new K-12 curriculum this coming school year 2012-2013 for Grade 1 and Grade 7 (1st year junior high school).

The assistant secretary mentioned that even if Grade 6 students transfer to other high schools to take advantage of other schools following the old system of four to fourth year high school or graduates early, these students will still be required to enroll in senior high school, which will be mandatory by that time.

HONOR ROLL

Miriam students reach out to differently-abled kids of Bagong Silang Elementary School

THIRTY-two fourth carrying 73 students and volunteers from the Miriam College-Basketball Association (MC-BASE) went to Caloocan last Dec. 9 for a special Christmas outreach to 243 kids with different disabilities from Bagong Silang Elementary School (BSES). The Miriam students brought with them loads of cuddle surprises with component numbers, bags of cookies and juice for the BSES kids to take home. This year's outreach dubbed "MC-BASE Reaches Out with a Smile" was sponsored by the MC-BASE parents and BM Philippines Inc. Verbana Bill Montenegro celebrated the Eucharist. "MC-BASE strongly supports this kind of activity because it promotes awareness of the realities of life such as poverty and the plight of the less fortunate. It is also an eye opener our dear students who realize that despite their disability, they still have the capacity to be of help to other people," says MC-BASE principal Carol B.

CLSU dominates anew in Philippine Science Consortium math and science quiz

BESTRIDE its other participating state universities and colleges from various regions of the country, the CLSU teams brought home the championship trophy of the annual Philippine Science Consortium (PSC) Math and Science Quiz held last Dec. 7 to 9 held at the Isarog College of Agriculture in Camiling, Tarlac. The Central Luzon State University also outpaced its own winning records last year in the various contest categories. The teams competed in four subject areas: Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics, said Dr. Amelia Dayanan, coordinator of the CLSU team. The CLSU delegation to the trip: 1 and third year Calendine) and the Chemistry team (Jhon Mike S. Mamuri and Kristina G. Villadolid). Ranked second best was the Physics team (Glen D. Jagolino and Erick Allan Flores. And ranked No. 3 is was the Mathematics team (Jan Martin S. Gonzales and Mae K.O. Fornasal). The winners received individual medals and cash prizes, and a championship trophy for the team. The other winners were Bulacan State University, second place; Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University, third place; Cavite State University, fourth place; and Nueva Ecija University of Sciences and Technology, fifth place. Prof. Elna Romano served as co-coordinator of the CLSU delegation. Coaches were former IM. Paragon (Biology), Amado Luis Ordoñez and Brilliant King R. Vergara (Chemistry), Dr. Edwin D. Bustos and Prof. Melanio G. Romano, Jr. (Mathematics), and Dr. Ingrid F. Cabanos and Jade Farrah T. Mendiola (Physics). PSC has 33 member-institutions. The new members are Romblon State University, Palawan State U, and Oriental Mindoro State College.

FEATI's Fine Arts students shine in Shell art tilt

FEATI University's School of Fine Arts (SFA) students continued to garner even more prominence and momentum in the field of the arts as evidenced by its splendid showing in the recently-concluded finals night of the 49th Shell National Students Art Competition (SSAC) held at the Ayala Museum in Makati City recently. The university, on its 65th year as an academic institution, continued to garner honors for its students in the most coveted courses of its students. This year's winners from FEATI University are: Paul Christopher C. Adriano, first place, Watercolor Category; Fernando S. Manalo, second place, Oil and Acrylic Category; and Lance Kirby T. Ferrer, third place, Watercolor Category. Manalo was a double-winner with his other entry, "Memento Mori," made it to the "best of the best" circle of finalists. His Mt. Lacap and Hanging Gardens were likewise recognized for their skill with the brush. A total of 40 colleges and universities in the Philippines submitted artworks for judging by widely-acclaimed artists Rodolfo Cardo, Lito Cavalong, Rock Drilon, Soler Santos, Ronald Ventura, Angel Cacnio, Antipas Delmoro, Romeo Hidalgo, Remi Mirandi, and Pablo Baen Santos. FEATI SFA's associate dean Jaime L. Young and art professor Neil M. De La Cruz, who both mentored and nurtured the students for this national event, were very proud of their students' achievements in what is known as the most prestigious art competition for young artists.

Angelicum College successfully launches musical play "The Blue Room"

ANGELICUM College successfully launched a musical play recently showcasing local talents to celebrate the English month with the theme "Enhancing Communication Skills through Literature." As a culminating activity, English, Reading and CLE (Christian Living Education) students, in cooperation with members of the Angelicum Repertory of Thespians and Concerned Society (ARTES), showcased a musical titled entitled "The Blue Room" with actors belting out featured songs from Broadway musicals like "Rent," "Les Miserables," "Miss Saigon," "Aida," and "Sarguo." The musical addresses many issues of betrayal, discrimination, friendships and overcoming business practices. The Blue Room revealed the chronicles/tales of Angelican learners. The great success of the musical play proved that Angelicum College is achieving excellence in theater arts. It is one way of embracing literature as one of the forces that dominate our humanity," Melissa Pangilinan, ARTES club moderator said. In a related development, activities allocated to Angelicum's Family Week. Parents took a time off and joined the celebration by participating games during Tuesday's sports' activities. Angelicum's External Affairs Office also launched "Tatanga sa Angel" to showcase entrepreneurial talents of parents and other partners with a viable array of products. The students' initiatives were also on hold during the same week. "It is so much fun during family week. Every year we wait for this celebration. It is like a fiesta inside the school," Nova de Leon, a communication arts students said.

Resistant TB detection machine now available at DLS research center

ROMARIC DE JESUS TAY tuberculosis or TB in sputum can now be detected readily at the De La Salle Health Sciences Institute's (DLSHSI) Center for Tuberculosis Research through the machine Gene Xpert. The rapid detection in approximately two hours is a marked improvement to the conventional solid media culture which takes up to two months.

Immediate identification of this armed-to-the-teeth germ will help the patient receive prompt management of the patient and enrollment in the Global Fund for AIDS, TB & Malaria (GFATM) global program to ensure the management of multidrug resistant TB. "It also means less chances of transmission to the community.

Aside from its speed, the Gene Xpert machine was also cited for its minimal hazard to the health worker and the environment, and for its "user-friendly" features since it requires very minimal training for its operation. Its availability at DLSHSI also ensures enhanced accessibility to quality care and management for TB patients in Region IV-A.

The machine was officially endorsed by the World Health Organization in December 2010. The machine at DLSHSI is only one of seven donated by GFATM in the country. DLSHSI is a recipient also having chosen as one of the partners of GFATM to the country in the fight against TB.

SPORTS

UE shines in competitions

UNIVERSITY OF the East (UE) recently fared well in badminton, fencing, swimming, taekwondo and table tennis at the 18th University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) season, and in weightlifting, basketball and international basketball tournaments. In the UAAP fencing championship, UE won its fifth straight overall title in the women's division and its second straight overall title in the boy's division. UE set the record of being the first fencing team in the UAAP history (in the girls' division). UE Lady Warrior Patricia Bianca Mabanglo was proclaimed the most valuable player (MVP) in the women's division, while in the junior's division, UE Junior Warriors Nathaniel Perez and Ron Paolo Subrico were hailed as MVP and Rookie of the Year, respectively. UE also shone in the first ever Metrobay Hill Fencing Championships at Mt. Makiling Golf and Country Club in Los Baños. The UE Warriors Fencers were under the guidance of head coach Roberto Cardiz Jr. and assistant coaches Rafel Lorenzo and Dexter Sy. UE won its 2nd title in the badminton competition women's division in the UAAP. UE Lady Warrior Jamilla Fatima Cruz was hailed as MVP while her teammate Jhochabe Andres was cited as Most Improved Player. UE's head coach Rocky E. Magsaysay was adjudged as best coach. In addition, UE won its second straight title in the women's division and its fifth straight title in the men's division at the 76th University Games held in Rosal City, in the swimming event. UE emerged as champion in high school division at the 74th UAAP season. Leading the champion UE girl's swimming team was Christine Joy Mendoza who was named MVP. Coach Jaime Garcellano guided the champion UE boys' squad. UE retained the UAAP Luzon/National basketball title in the junior division as UE succeeded in defending its crown, garnering its second three-peat record (UAAP seasons 2003-2005 and 2009-2011). Coaching the champion UE Jr. Warriors paddlers is Angelo Paolo Jr., also adjudged as best coach. A UE BLIS senior, Jyr Glen S. Leyva won the MVP title. The UE Junior Warriors paddlers (boys' division) won the 7th Eastern Cup Table Tennis Championship. Meanwhile, the UE BLIS girls' emerged champion of the recent 28th National Preparatory Basketball Championship

ED LINGAD and Carolyn Argallon with some of the participants in "Media Now for Peaceful Mindanao: A Forum on Peace Reporting"

MGMD participants read Manila-based newspapers.

MSTRH and Mambonsolo reply to questions from participants.

Report peace in Mindanao, not war

By Herminio Coscolluela Adriatico
Asst. Professor
Contributor

PERCEPTIONS of Mindanao are influenced by how educational institutions teach history and also by the media.

Within these years, I was blind in the beauty of Mindanao because during Manila-based, Illustrated books about it from Manila-based newspapers, listening to radio, or watching television. We do not know that Mindanao is rich in history and natural resources. All we know is it is a very dangerous place," said Hilary Rose Aldave, a junior journalism student in the Colegio de San Juan de Letran.

"Teachers can pass on their ignorance to hundreds of students but media have millions to influence every second of the day," pointed out Carolyn Argallon, a veteran and multi-awarded Mindanao journalist.

Mindanao is usually described as "conflict ridden." One isolated incident is reported as "violence in Mindanao."

The death of 19 soldiers in Al-Barkah, Basilan, during an encounter with members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in October was described by some media groups as "massacre" and "slaughter."

The loaded words were used out of context according to Ed Lingao, task media director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ).

Peace journalism

Media's sensationalism was criticized by different sectors in the country. Following the incident, young professionals and volunteers of the Mindanao Generation of Peacemakers (Peace Tech) organized "Media Now for Peaceful Mindanao: A Forum on Peace Reporting" at the University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, in cooperation with the Office of The Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

The event coincided with the celebration of Mindanao Week of Peace and Islamic New Year 1433.

Fifty-five communication students from Metro Manila universities were introduced to the concept of peace journalism.

Lingao said many reporters did not first like need to understand what the fighting was about in Mindanao. He said even more strange and tragic was they did not know there was a difference between war and conflict reporting.

War reporting, he said, was about what was happening while conflict reporting focused on what was happening as a result of what happened before and what was happening still.

War reporting was what many reporters do. Lingao pointed out, it was easy to just get the number of casualties and identify parties involved. As a result, the conflict became a mere police blotter report or a crime story.

Some reporters thought understanding the historical roots of the insurgency in Mindanao was difficult and complicated.

Television reporter Chino Gaston said Manila broadcast journalists remain in Mindanao with a distorted perspective.

He admitted that action-packed and compelling videos were given priority in TV news broadcasts. But, he added, "(It's my responsibility to read, research, and appreciate different solutions) for me to have a (proper) perspective when I tell stories. It's (to help) the people have an informed public opinion."

Lingao reminded the literate media practitioners that the biggest battles would not be in the front line. "They will be in the newsrooms, where you will fight for the stories that deserve to be told," he said.

Media now for Mindanao

Maloi Mangohig, executive director of PCIJ, urged participants to be active media consumers. Being young was not an excuse to be passive about issues affecting their communities. The social media had empowered citizen journalism.

OPAPP Assistant Secretary Abinassar Mesin said it was high time people understood and cared about the problem in Mindanao. "Every Filipino is a stakeholder in the peace process. The Philippines is being pulled back by the war in Mindanao."

Speakers told the audience that, contrary to popular belief, the problems in Mindanao was not a religious conflict. The root of the problem was historical injustices, including land grabbing that went back to the time of colonialism.

Lawyer Nasser Mendoza-Pangalian, a Moro author and human rights advocate, said both Christians and Muslims lived in peace. "There is no problem about our faith in God. We are of the same race but the conflicts have widened the gap."

Bantuan Abdul Rauf, a PeaceTech/Manila ambassador who was also with OPAPP, encouraged other educated youth to use their skills, interests and passion in peace-building and peace journalism.

"Use freedom of speech and freedom of the press responsibly. Use what powers you have to empower others. Help in addressing misconceptions, misunderstanding, and correcting wrong perceptions."

Benjamin Rashamil Bondoc, a senior mass communication student at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, noted: this pledge he joined. "As a future journalist, I pledge to tell only the truth behind every story. I will because it is correct. I will because it is correct that I express respect. It is because, what one says assesses, you tell is right and everyone learns from it. May peace and truth always prevail through responsible and peace journalists."

CHINO Gaston

DOA EXECUTIVES, and chefs, with ACF representatives, from left: Luis Anglove, Marilyn Cruz, Caroline Levine, April Martinez. CCA president Susana R Guerrero, Don Dickinson, Derek Spendlove, Melissa Sison, Dr. Ventura Lomo, Tim Alexander, Jon Tirsen and May Martinez

Culinary school chefs first to be certified by ACF

THREE instructors at CCA, Manila are now officially certified culinary professionals by the American Culinary Federation (ACF).

They are the first chefs in the country to get the recognition.

The newly certified chefs are led by academic program manager Melissa D. Sison, who was conferred the title of certified executive chef (CEC).

The other chef instructors who handled the certification process included Tim Alexander (certified chef de cuisine), Mary Cruz (certified chef de cuisine), Jon Tirsen (certified chef de cuisine), May Martinez (certified pastry cuisine), Gaia Anglove (certified sous chef), April Martinez (certified sous chef), Carol Lavin (certified working pastry chef), and Irene Rosario (certified working pastry chef).

The ACF delegation that visited the country, which included chefs Derek Spendlove, Don Dickinson and James Taylor, supervised the examination at the CCA, Manila Estipanan campus in Quezon City.

Sison said the certification process was very challenging and rigorous. They were assessed on practically every aspect of being a chef.

She said she underwent the process as a personal challenge and to hone the morale of chef instructors at CCA, Manila. She said she had to set a good example to the faculty.

The ACF delegation recommended CCA, Manila for the achievement, which coincided with the school's 13th foundation anniversary. Dickinson said he was impressed by the school's facilities and the quality of students and instructors.

ACF is the largest professional chefs' organization in North America, with more than 22,000 members belonging to more than 225 chapters in four regions across the United States. Governed by the Council on Higher Education for Accreditation, ACF is the only organization in non-profit culinary arts, baking and pastry programs in the US.

The recent certification of some of CCA, Manila's chef instructors made the Philippines the only country outside the US to have such a distinction.

Good teachers have... From page G1

many value-added ratings, noting that they tend to bounce around for a given teacher from year to year and class to class. But looking at an individual's value-added score for three or four classes, due to teachers found that score consistently outperformed their peers.

"Even though I believe that teacher quality is very, very important," says Eric A. Hanushek, a senior fellow at the Hoover In. stitution at Stanford and longtime researcher of education policy. "When this paper and other work has shown is that it's probably more important than people think. That the variations in effectiveness between really good and really bad teachers have lifelong impacts on children."

The average effect of one teacher on a single student is modest. All else equal, a student with one excellent teacher for one year between fourth and eighth grade would earn $4,600 in lifetime earnings, compared to a student of similar demographics who has an average teacher. The student with the excellent teacher would also be 0.5 percent more likely to attend college.

But because so important, given the difficulty of finding, training and retaining outstanding teachers, is that the differences in long-term outcome between students who have average teachers and those with poor-performing ones is so significant as the difference between those who have excellent teachers and those with average ones, the study found.

In the aggregate, those differences are potentially enormous.

Replacing a poor teacher with an average one would raise a single classroom's lifetime earnings by some $266,000, the economists estimate. Multiply that by a one year's worth of classrooms.

"If you have a low value-added teacher in your school for 10 years, rather than replacing him with an average teacher, you are hypothetically talking about $1.5 million in lost income," said Friedman, one of the coauthors.

To do the study, the researchers first tackled the question that has swirled controversy in so many school districts, including New York City's: whether value-added scores are in fact a good measure of teacher quality. Mr. Jones might regularly help raise test scores (more than Ms. Smith), but maybe those are because his students are from wealthier families, or because he has a harder-working class—factors that can be difficult for researchers to discern.

While Stanford, at Columbia, has previously written favorably about value-added ratings, the Harvard pair were skeptical of the method. "We said, 'We're going to show that these measures don't work, that they have to do with student motivation or principal selection or something else,'" Chetty recalled.

But controlling for numerous factors, including students' backgrounds, the researchers found that the value-added scores consistently identified some teachers as better than others, even if individual teachers' value-added scores varied from year to year.

After identifying excellent, average and poor teachers, the economists then set out to look at their students over the long term, analyzing information on earnings, college matriculation rates, the age they had children, and where they ended up living.

The results were striking. Looking only at test scores, previous studies had shown, the effects of a good teacher mostly faded after three or four years. But the broader view showed that the students still benefit for years to come.

Students with top teachers are less likely to become pregnant as teenagers, more likely to attend college, and more likely to earn more money as adults, the study found.

The authors argue that school districts should use value-added measures in evaluations, and in some cases the bonus payments, despite the disruption and controversy involved.

"The message is to fire people sooner rather than later," Friedman said.

Chetty acknowledged, "Of course (firing) is going to be mistakes—teachers who get fired who do not deserve to get fired." But he said that using value-added scores would lead to fewer mistakes, not more.

Still, transitioning value-added scores into policy is fraught with problems. Judging teachers by their students' test scores might encourage cheating, teaching to the test or lobbying to have certain students in class, for instance.

"We are performing these studies in settings where nobody cares about their ranking—it does not change their pay or job security," said Jesse Rothstein, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, whose work criticizing value-added assessments comes to entirely the "But if you start to change that, there is going to be a range of responses."

Many other researchers and school administrators say that even if imperfect, well-calculated value-added scores are an important part of evaluating teachers.

"Every few people suggest that you should use value-added scores alone to make personnel decisions," Hanushek, of Stanford, said. "What the whole value-added debate has done is push forward the issue of how to evaluate teachers, and how to use that information."

The new study found no evidence because one piece of conventional wisdom: That having a good teacher in an early grade has a bigger effect than having a good teachers in later grades. —New York Times News Service

BATANES 'READ ALOUD'

Participants in the Manly Planners Balance workshop conduct a Read Aloud in Itbayat. The program was initiated by Gigk the Amazing Sarpagquito Foundation Inc. that donates books with the help of funds across the Bass. Nieuwen's Batanes Photo Safari 2012 will be held on Feb. 24-27, Mar. 9-12, 23-26 Apr. 6-10, 14-17, and 27-30 May 4-8, 11-15 and 18-19. E-mail mandy@yahoo.com or call 8961288. Visit http://mandy-nieuwen.blogspot.com or Nieuwen's studio at Room 124 LBZ Design Plaza, 1196 Roxas Garcia St., Baguio City, Habal-Habal City

THE VERY modern facade of the museum

THE EVOLUTION of Man exhibit

EVEN a scale model of the intimidating or whodathunk dinosaurs.

A first-class *science museum* opens in Taguig

By Stephen Marvin B. Padilla
Photos by Arnold Almacen

INTEREST in science may rise significantly among Filipinos with the formal opening this March of The Mind Museum at Taguig (TMBT), the first world-class science museum in the Philippines.

The 11,500-square-meter educational facility is at the J.E. Campos Park, 26th Avenue, Bonifacio Global City (BGC) in Taguig City.

It aims to make visitors more interested in science by showing its "beauty, clarity and intriguing character."

"With the creation of The Mind Museum, more young Filipinos will take interest in science and technology," said Vice President Jejomar Binay in his keynote address during the pre-launch of TMBT.

Binay said the youth could become part of the nationbuilding effort through this endeavor, as he pointed out that "science is a multi-sensitive and should be put to work for the benefit of the Filipino people."

TMBT consor Maria Isabel Garcia said, first and foremost, "people need to understand basic science."

Interactive

The museum's 250 interactive exhibits are divided into five galleries: atom, Earth, life, universe and technology.

The atom gallery shows the strange world of the smallest particle of matter. It showcases a zebra lizard displaying basic gravity works and an electric table to teach about magnetism, among others.

Earth will be the story of the planet and the Philippine archipelago across the breadth of time. It includes a replica T. rex named Stan and a 3D animated film made by an all-Filipino crew that encapsulates 4.6 billion years of Earth's natural history and evolution in 12 minutes.

The life gallery gives a visitor the chance to have a deeper understanding of the living things in this world. Its highlights include large animals, such as the barendog or whale shark, and a giant model of the human brain.

The universe gallery gives a glimpse of the mysteries and immensity of outer space. It has a planetarium that simulates stargazing while lying down under the night sky.

Finally, the technology gallery on the second floor shows the tools invented by human society that express their awakening humanity. Features are the solar "tree" manned by a halogen lamp that serves as the sun and MIMO, an in-house elevator-awaiting robot that freely roams around the gallery.

TMBT also has an outdoor feature, *in the Park* where visitors can play through four themed parkers: music, mathematics, living and water.

Other learning offerings include an auditorium for upcoming engagements, laboratory, classrooms and a special vacant room for rewarding exhibits.

THE PLANETARIUM simulates the experience of stargazing under the night sky.

Discount for teachers

Entrance fee is P400 for students and P600 for adults. Public schools and teachers in all levels get a discounted rate of P250.

Visitors are encouraged to book and pay online through www.themindmuseum.org. TMBT will time slots for each visits. The schedule is as follows: 9 a.m.-11am.; 12nn.-3p.m., 3-6 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. The museum can accommodate 500 visitors at a time.

Tours begin 20 minutes after the start of the chosen time slot and will be facilitated by guides called "mind movers." Movie will play 20 minutes before the end of the allotted time to signal that the next group is about to start its museum experience. Walk-in visits, however, will be regulated.

During the planning stage, TMBT consulted international experts from Science Center Singapore and Jack Hanna Associates (USA). But the museum is completely Filipino-made from conceptualization to actual exhibits.

Manny A. Rio II, TMBT managing director said 60 percent of the museum was made by Filipinos. Areas involved such as writers and engineers to finish and closely

STAN, the T. rex, towers over visitors. Though just a replica of the prehistoric dinosaur, Stan's chin shows why his kind was one of the most feared.

THE BUSINESS Communications 07 class of Ateneo's Graduate School of Business is raising money for the PGH pediatrics department.

Ateneo graduate students help PGH

THE BUSINESS Communications 07 class of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business, with Child Foundation Inc., will raise some P1 million for incubators and pediatric beds for the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) pediatrics department.

The campaign is called "Keeping the Dreams Alive."

PGH, the largest public hospital in the country, lacks medical equipment for the proper treatment and care of babies and other kids.

The hospital, which treats over a thousand premature born and other critically ill babies every year, has only three working incubators.

Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla, president of Child Foundation Inc., said the hospital often used giant mesh lamps, instead of incubators, to keep babies warm. But the lamps were not always effective, she said.

She added that adult-sized beds used in the pediatric wards did not have the proper railings to prevent falls.

Those wishing to contribute to the fundraising can donate online using credit or debit card through https://www.childfoundationinc.org.ph.

Donations may also be deposited to Child Foundation Inc., through Banco de Oro (BDO) Account Number 2411087236dc. Checks in the name of the Child Foundation Inc. may be brought to the Department of Pediatrics Office, Ward 9, PGH, Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila.

Call the Child Foundation Inc. at 5802052 or e-mail info@childfoundationinc.org.ph.

9th Citi Junior Bankers Congress launched

CITE Philippines and the Finex Research and Development Foundation, Inc. have launched the 9th Citi Junior Bankers Congress.

The program, funded by the Citi foundation, aims to provide college students with first-hand knowledge of the banking and finance sector and link participants with potential mentors and jobs in Finex member companies.

Citi and Finex foundation, the non-profit association of the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, will invite 200 undergraduate finance students from all over the country to participate in the training and internship.

Started in Manila, the Citi Junior Bankers Congress will bring together top graduating finance students from state universities in Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao in the first quarter of 2012.

In Manila, 80 students from nine state universities listened to seasoned bankers talk on finance and give advice on career and professional development.

Participants represented the top 20 percent of graduating finance students from Polytechnic University of the Philippines, University of Makati, Batangas State University, Bulacan State University, Laguna University, Nueva Ecija University, Pamantasan ng Cabuyao, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa and the University of the Philippines Diliman.

Citi corporate affairs director Anneh Lim said expanding educational opportunities for the youth was an important way for Citi to give back to the community.

Citibank Inc., vice president Noser Ichua, one of the speakers, talked about a career in banking and the different opportunities in the industry.

Ichua said success in banking was not as much about technical abilities and concepts learned in school but a person's ability to build the foundation to achieve his/her goals.

Citi country economist Jun Trinidad gave an economy briefing and stressed the importance of understanding these fundamentals in making business decisions.

He gave an overview of the global economy and linked the impact of recent economic developments to the Philippine market.

The congress also included sessions on personality development.

Professor Albert Bautista, dean of the Ateneo de Manila Graduate School of Business, talked about "Leadership and Corporate Governance." He said the students they should be "effective, efficient, and always act with integrity."

Abigail Bautista, a graduating management major from Nueva Polytechnic College, said, after the congress, he wanted to explore a career in banking, possibly starting with human resources

CITI country economist Trinidad gives students an overview of the global economy.

FROM left, Citibank's Aneth Lim and Tonet Ichua with Finex's professional development committee chair Ronald Cruzco